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FREEDOM AND
THE CHURCHES

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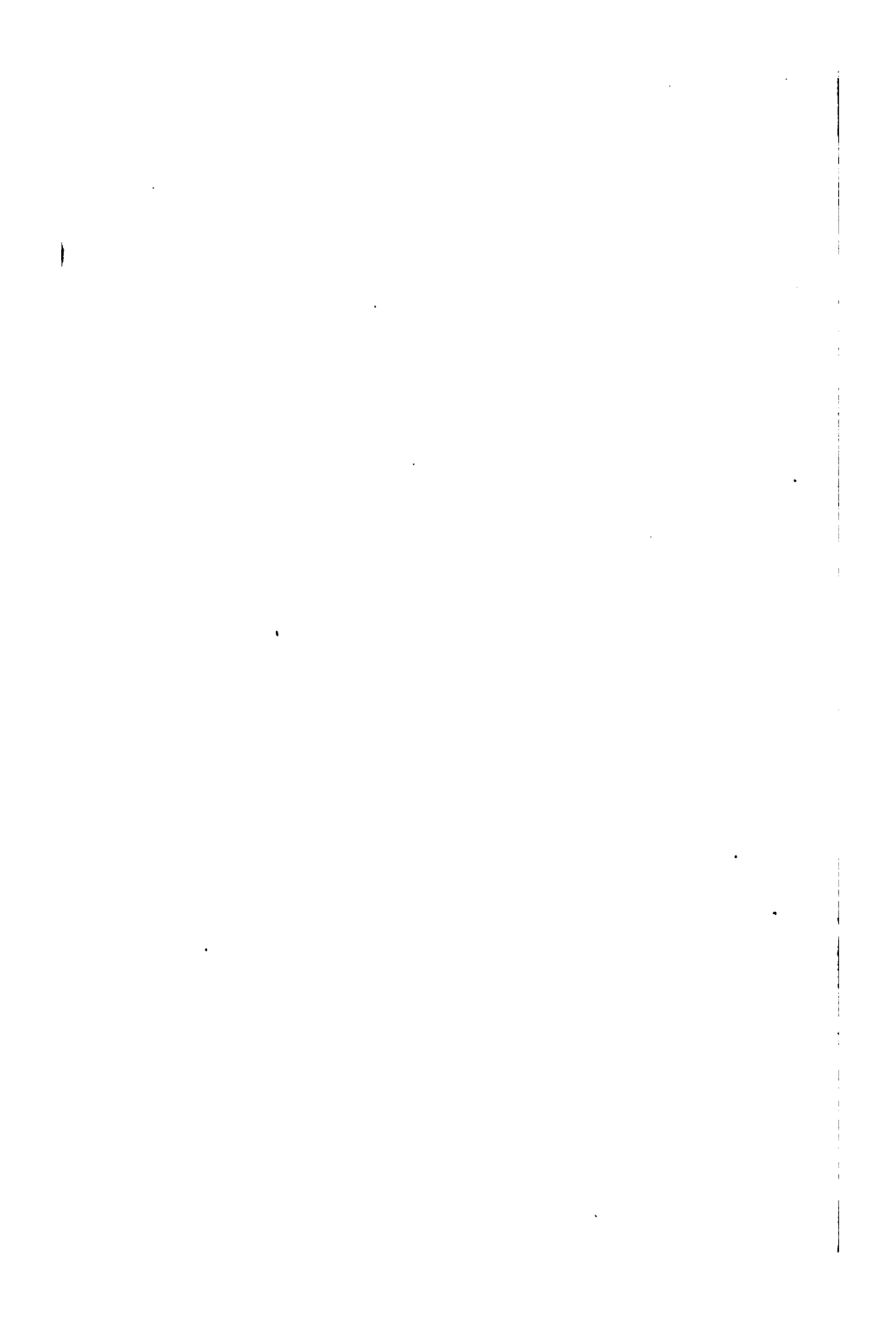
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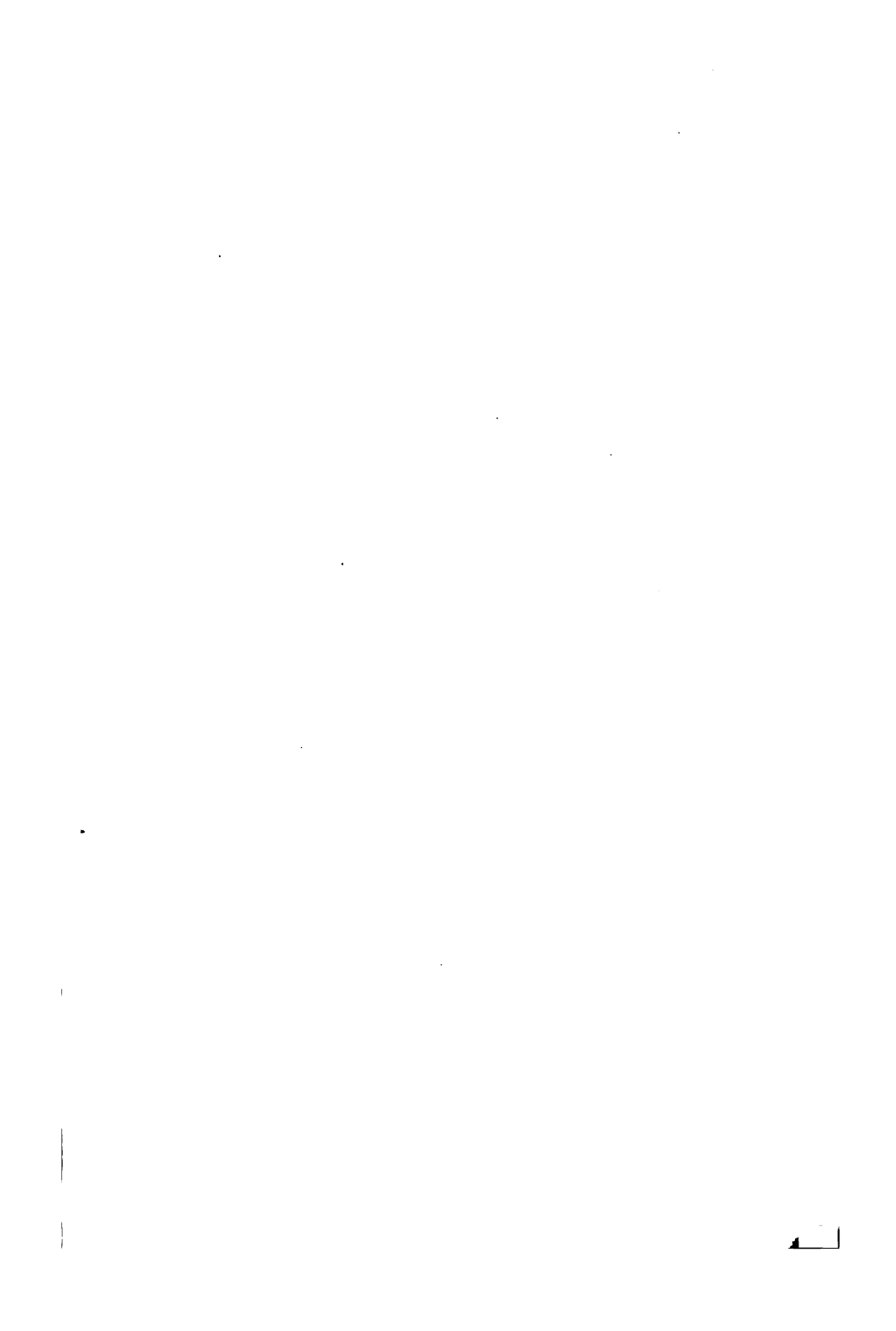
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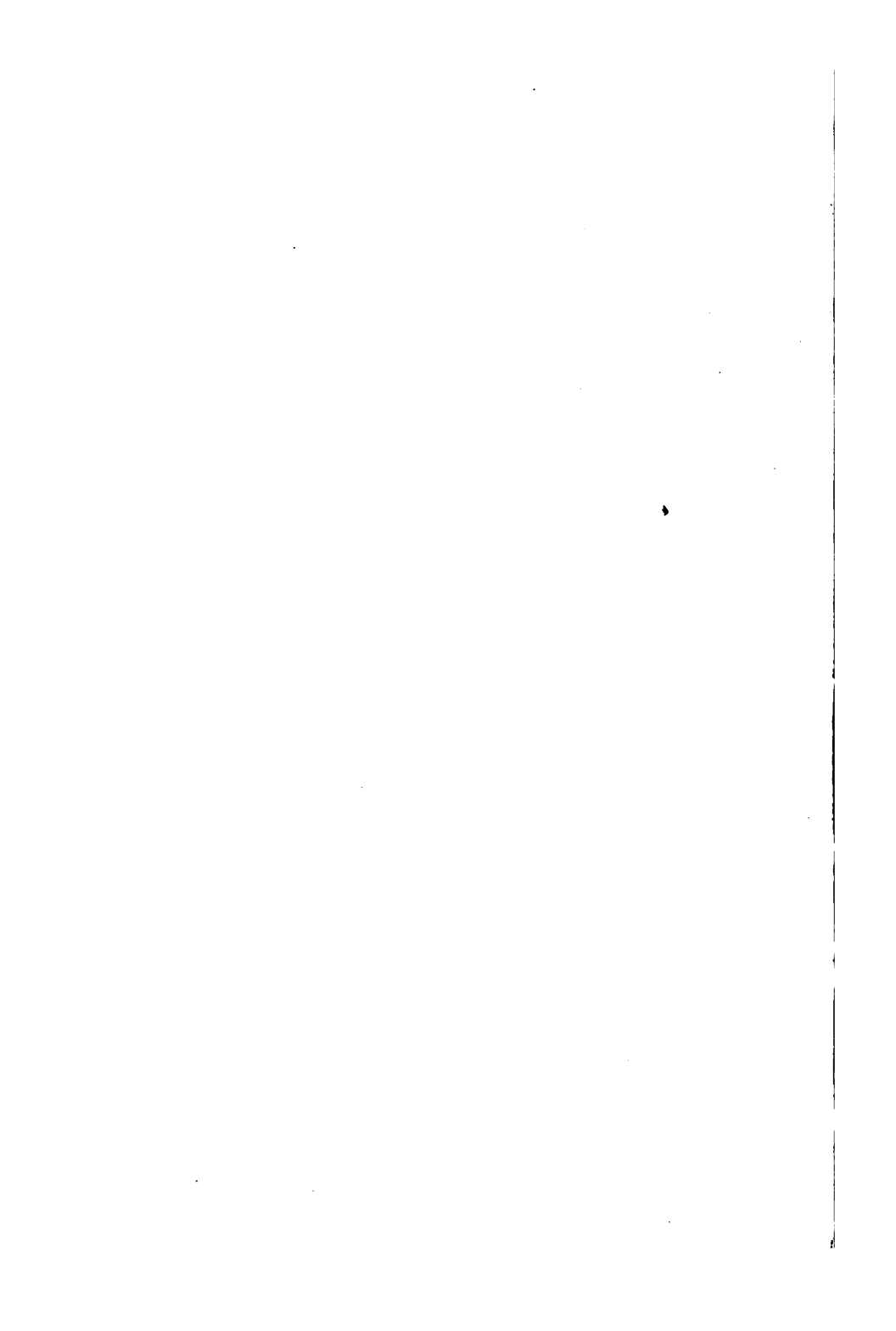
from his old-time friend,
with a Christmas Greeting.

Chas. M. Wendt









FREEDOM AND THE CHURCHES

*The Contributions of American Churches
to Religious and Civil Liberty*

EDITED BY

CHARLES W. WENDTE, D.D.



BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
1918

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INTRODUCTION

In the early part of the year 1913 a liberal religious congress was held in the city of Rochester, New York, one of whose features was a series of addresses by speakers of prominence in the American religious community on the contributions of American Churches to religious and civil liberty.

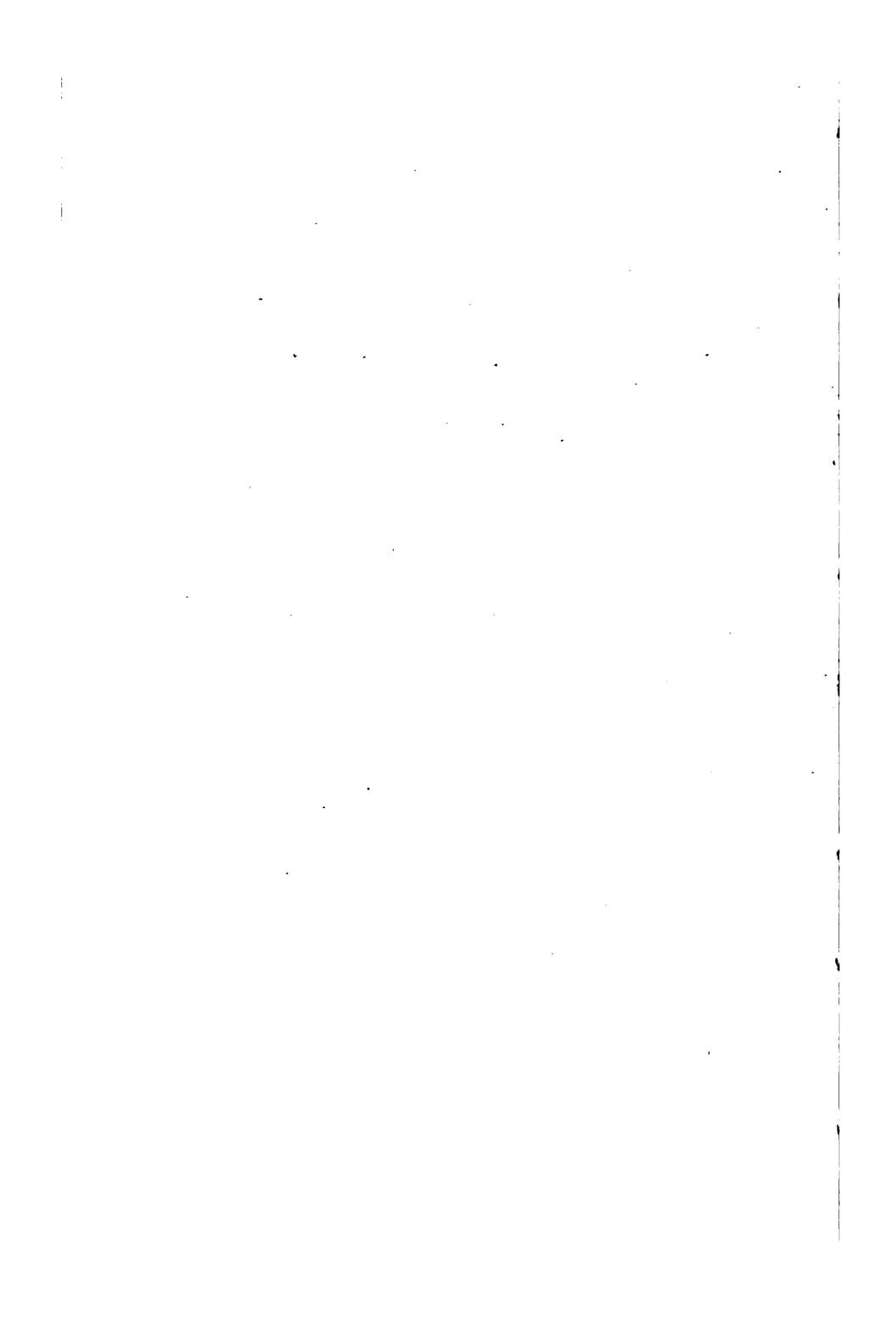
It has been thought that the interest and value of these papers warranted their publication.

While they have been revised by their authors it is inevitable that they should in some degree retain the informality of extemporized addresses. This is, however, atoned for by the freshness, directness and vigor of these utterances, in which the eminent services of American Churches to religious and civil liberty find eloquent and convincing expression. Professor Williston Walker, D.D., has kindly contributed a chapter to this volume in which the contribution of the Congregational Churches of the United States to the cause of religious freedom is more fully exhibited.

CHARLES W. WENDTE.

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I

THE BAPTIST CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH, D.D.

The contributions which Baptists have made to theology have been comparatively small. They have always been strongest among the common people and have had less hereditary lodgment among the educated classes than, for instance, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Their strict biblicism has also hampered their theological freedom. They have been dragged in the wake of Presbyterian theology. On the other hand, their contributions to the religious and civil liberty now attained in the Western World have been immense.

It is possible to use the term "Baptists" in a narrower and a wider sense. In the narrower, denominational sense, they are an offshoot of English Congregationalism which has gained great numerical power in the English speaking nations. In the wider, historical sense they are part of that great democratic movement of modern Christianity, which began in the evangelical movements before the Reformation and made its first great stride to-

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ward historical power in the Anabaptist movement of the Reformation. The Mennonites, the Dunkards and the Quakers belong to the same great stream of religious life in this wider sense.

I shall speak first of the Continental Anabaptists of the Swiss and German Reformation.

The Reformation fractured the monopoly of the Catholic Church and broke the hypnotic spell of its infallibility. It lost its power to enforce uniformity and submission in large parts of Europe. But the Anabaptists were the radicals of the Protestant Reformation.

The Reformers were against the pope and most of them were against the bishops. The Anabaptists were against the entire clerical church. Their ideal was church democracy and lay Christianity.

The Reformers pruned down mediæval sacramentalism mainly in so far as it clustered around the Lord's Supper. They did not venture to apply the same principles to infant baptism. Since baptism is the rite of initiation into the church, any fundamental change in baptism involved a change in the conception of the Church itself and a revolution as to its membership. The Anabaptists alone risked that.

Luther had refused submission to the old theological authorities and leaned back on the Bible and human reason, but he reserved this privilege for himself and the theologians. The Anabaptists put the same spirit into the common man and thereby multiplied the centers of independence in

matters of religion. They carried the spirit of inquiry, of religious self-determination, into the masses. History is not made by the intellectuals alone. The decisive turns in history begin when broad masses of men are welded into unity of action by some new guiding principle. History is not made by writing pamphlets but by creating solid and stubborn social forces. Even if the Anabaptists had never written a book about religious liberty, they created the fact of religious liberty and in time the world had to make room for that fact.

The world at first refused to make room and undertook to whip these rebellious artisans into line. Their slaughter was enormous and unparalleled in history. Catholics and Protestants alike sought to suppress them. Their sufferings did not profit their own cause. Their movement was almost entirely crushed. But their passive sufferings did help the larger life in the long run. "By their stripes we were healed."

In addition to their passive resistance they also made active literary protest against coercion in religion. Balthasar Hubmaier wrote the most remarkable plea for liberty of conscience produced in the sixteenth century. Some individuals in other bodies might arrive at the idea of toleration to all. With Baptists that was a necessary part of their conviction. A Baptist who does not believe in religious liberty is an illogical Baptist, only slightly affected by his own principles, a case

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of atavism, a throw-back in religion. The essential thing with them was not at all baptism, but a free church of believers. Baptism of adult believers was simply a corollary. The essential thing was a pure, spiritual, and voluntary church. But infant baptism admits all to membership and makes a church of the regenerate in time impossible to maintain, as the "Half-way Covenant" in New England shows. But such a voluntary organization cannot use force to compel others to come in; it cannot suppress dissent; it cannot exact State support. This then lifts the whole church out of the realm of coercion into the realm of liberty.

It is almost impossible for us to imagine how daring an experiment in freedom it was to create such churches. If the warden in some State's prison should to-day propose that all prisoners in all penal institutions be employed out-doors and put on their honor not to cross bounds, that might offer a fair analogy to the impression made by the proposal of the Baptists in the sixteenth century.

Their faith in religious liberty was closely connected with faith in civil liberty. Since they fought for religious freedom, they necessarily desired free assembly, free speech and a free press. The creation of free religious bodies narrowed the realm of coercion in human society. It created protected areas of freedom where the soul could learn the art of being free, and for all who lived

in the atmosphere of religious freedom within the church, tyranny in civil life became less tolerable.

Most Anabaptists were opposed to capital punishment, to war, and to oaths. But these are simply the physical and spiritual means of coercing men by which the tyrannical State is held together. These distinctive characteristics of Anabaptism all turn against coercive government. Many of them also refused to hold any civil office because as magistrates they would be compelled to coerce others; consequently they were always suspected of revolutionary designs and there was an uneasy feeling that somehow there was social dynamite among them.

The ordinary church historian sees only the Mennonite sects as a slender continuation of the Anabaptist movement. A larger historical vision will trace their historical continuity in the "Age of Enlightenment" in the eighteenth century and in the Social Democracy of the nineteenth century.

I pass now to England. The Reformation in England, as we remember, was belated and did not gather full headway till the seventeenth century in the Puritan movement. Here again a radical wing arose which comprised the Independents, Baptists and Quakers who all stood for democracy. Catholics, Episcopalians and Presbyterians at that time might occasionally see the beauties of toleration when they were themselves hard hit and oppressed. But only few and rare utterances can

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be found from these sources. On the other hand, a number of publications advocating religious liberty issued from Baptist hands. The question is if any Baptist of that time can be produced who was *not* in favor of religious liberty. The reason for this difference in spiritual complexion is that liberty is an essential in Baptist principles.

We all know that the Puritan revolution had an incalculable influence on the progress of civil and religious liberty. But the Independents, Baptists and Quakers were the advance guard of democracy. They were not during the revolutionary period sharply defined sects, but rather sections of the progressive movement. The "New Model" which was the center of initiative was filled with Independents and Baptists. The religious and political sympathies of every man were closely allied. Thus the permanent achievements of the Puritan Revolution were largely due to this radical group.

After the restoration of the Stuarts, the Baptists once more had to champion the cause of freedom by their sufferings. The Quakers and Baptists glutted the jails. It was at this time that the Baptist John Bunyan was in Bedford jail. If all these people had humbly and supinely conformed to the Anglican Church, it would have re-established its monopoly, and religious liberty would have had a sorry outlook in Great Britain. Its actual advance was achieved at every step by the active propaganda and resistance of the Non-Conformist bodies. The "Non-Conformist con-

science" has also been one of the steady, constructive forces making for civil democracy in England.

I have time only for a brief reference to the influence exerted by Baptists here in America. The various churches which established themselves in the American colonies imported their traditions from Europe. They demanded religious uniformity, suppression of dissent, and support by taxation as a matter of course. Neither the Puritans of Massachusetts nor the Cavaliers of Virginia believed in religious liberty. The Catholics of Maryland were in so straitened a position that they were willing to gain toleration for themselves by tolerating others. The toleration existing in Pennsylvania was due to the influence of English Quakerism and German Anabaptism. Roger Williams was the one man to whom freedom was a religion. As Saint Francis wedded the Lady Poverty, so Saint Roger wedded the Lady Liberty. Baptists have been somewhat too cheerful in claiming the glory for Roger Williams and Rhode Island. But there was a strong natural affinity between them. They struck hands there to transfer the ideal of liberty into the institutions of government. Little Rhode Island was an inventor's model. History has since then abundantly tried it out. Religion to-day is weakest where coercion in its behalf is most common.

During the colonial period it fell to the Baptists and Quakers to bear the brunt of what was left

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of the old persecuting spirit. They invaded the monopoly of the other churches. And they were not genteel. They refused to pay taxes and keep quiet. They always carried a chip on their shoulders. But their persecution helped to make persecution odious.

The American Revolution was a crucial time in the development of religious liberty in our country. It put an end to the possibility of an Anglican State Church in America. It was proposed by very eminent men that all churches alike should henceforth be supported by taxation. All citizens were to be compelled to pay toward the support of religion but might designate the church to which their taxes should go. In that case all denominations would have had their hand in the public purse. That is the very evil which we fear to-day in connection with the State support of parochial schools. The Baptists seem to have been the only denomination which set itself against this policy as a body. They were also very influential in the adoption of the first amendment to the Constitution prohibiting the establishment of religion or interference with religious liberty. It is rather appalling to think what a mixing of religion and politics would have meant in the democratic life of America during the nineteenth century. The Church has been one of the few sections of our social organizations that has been free from graft. This we owe in part at least to the Baptists.

The Methodists and Baptists have long gained

a vast preponderance in point of numbers among all Protestant bodies in America. They achieved this in spite of the fact that they could gain little increase by immigration. The Catholics, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, had entire nations from which to draw their increase. The Methodists and Baptists had to secure their increase by some sort of efficiency. They established themselves chiefly among the farmers and the working class and trained these classes in the workings of democracy. Both of these great bodies have certainly helped to make freedom a second nature to countless men and women and have predisposed them to favor political and social liberty wherever these were called in question. In that way the little church democracies scattered broadcast over our country have helped to maintain civil liberty. In the present struggle for a wider social and economic democracy they have not failed to raise their old war-cries and to manifest their ancient spirit.

The extreme individualism which characterizes the Baptist churches is not a complete and final expression of religion in human society. It can be understood only as a reaction against the coercive religion of the past. Now that religious liberty is conceded by all, and most of the great churches, abandoning their ancient ecclesiastical pride, have adjusted themselves to the practice of equality, the Baptists may safely modify their militant individualism and enter into that commu-

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nity religion which seems to be the present destiny of American religious life. It is one of the minor tragedies of history that this individualism, which was essentially a fighting attitude, now handicaps the Baptists to some extent in adjusting themselves to the social needs of the present day. But they have not spoken their last word.

II

THE CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

WILLISTON WALKER, D.D.

Each of the bodies into which American Christendom is divided has made its gift to the sum total of American Christianity. No one of them can say that its peculiar contribution is of exclusive value. It is the many strands that have gone into the weaving of the fabric that give to American Christianity its most distinctive traits, its toleration, its large degree of mutual sympathy, its appeal to American life from many angles, its flexibility and adaptability to new conditions, its willingness to try experiments and attempt new adjustments in Christian activities. If, therefore, at this time the characteristic contributions of a single group of American churches are emphasized, it is with claim to no preponderating importance, but only in the belief that what the Congregational Churches have brought has been of worth in making up the bundle of American Christianity. Those churches have had their marked individuality, and they have stood for definite conceptions which have deeply influenced American religious life.

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Yet in any consideration of the contributions of the Congregational Churches of America to civil and religious liberty the student must be on his guard lest he claim as the special gift of those churches much that was, indeed, conspicuously theirs, but theirs only as part of the general heritage of the great family of Christian churches to which they and others of similar spiritual antecedents belong. The Congregational churches brought to these shores the Calvinistic inheritance. Much of that which appears most markedly characteristic of them, and which they have aided most distinctly in impressing on American life, was not of original development with them, however effective their transmission of it, but had come to them from the mighty movement that originated in Geneva.

Perhaps the most profoundly influential element in this common Calvinistic inheritance was the conviction that the Christian is called to be a fellow-worker with God. His election,—and the word though strange to most modern ears was very familiar and significant to the founders of New England, was no election to the passive enjoyment of salvation. That election was indeed an unmerited grace; but it was a call and an endowment for strenuous activity. It summoned a man to make the will of God regnant first of all in his own life, and then in the life of the community, so far as his influence extended. It taught no meek endurance of evils and ills that could be

overcome whether in personal character or in corporate association. God had chosen his servants in a high sense for partnership with him in the advancement of his Kingdom, and that labor involved a strenuous and self-denying activity.

It is from this conception as from a main root that much that is characteristic of Congregationalism has grown. The settlement of the colonies in the raw wilderness across the Atlantic, that the founders might here establish the religious institutions which they believed to be prescribed by the Word of God, was but a manifestation of this spirit. They felt that, in a true sense, God had called them to set up his Kingdom in the new world, and that they would be disobedient to the divine will should they fail to heed the summons. From this conception, too, has sprung the reformatory zeal always characteristic of the churches of Congregational ancestry, whether they bear the Congregational name or not. It is this conviction that the Christian is chosen to make the will of God regnant in the community in which he lives, that gave birth to the "New England conscience,"—a reformatory zeal not always agreeable in its manifestations, it may be, and often ridiculed by those of alien spiritual ancestry, but, after all, about the best of New England possessions. Yet it is evident that these characteristics, marked as they are in Congregationalism, are not of Congregational

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origin. They are part of the common Calvinistic heritage.

A similar denial of any exclusive monopoly must be entered regarding the conception of relationship to the business of every-day life, and to the use of the things of the world in which men live, which is one of the notable traits of those of Congregational training. Congregationalism of course shared the results of that freedom won for all Protestantism by Luther, which is perhaps his greatest single contribution to modern Christian development, when he taught that not in separation from ordinary life, but in the natural social relationships of the family and the honest labor of the field or workshop, the true sphere of Christian living is to be found. But even Luther had looked askance at trade, and had held that a desire to rise above the station in which a man found himself was almost a denial of the rightfulness of the divine appointment. With Calvinism had come the thought that men are placed in the world to use it, not for luxury, but with such mastery of its resources as God may give them power to achieve. To rise by increasing control of its gifts is not only not blameworthy, it is in harmony with the will of God. Contentment with one's lot, when that lot may be bettered by the honorable use of such means as a man has in his power, is no duty of a Christian man. Honest trade is honorable. Want of industry and thrift are worthy only of contempt.

This spirit, now perhaps regarded as old fashioned in our pleasure loving age, was long a characteristic of the Congregational training. It involved a thrift that would not abuse God's gifts by waste, but looked with satisfaction on their increase, especially if employed in stewardship for the advancement of God's Kingdom. But it, too, was a part of the common Calvinistic heritage.

Much the same affirmation must be made regarding another eminent characteristic of the Congregational churches,—their love of education. It is with satisfaction that any son of New England recalls the foundation of schools in Massachusetts and Connecticut within half a decade of the settlement, the requirement of 1639 that each town provide instruction for its children, and the foundation of Harvard College in 1636 and of Yale in 1701. This early love for education has characterized Congregationalism to the present day. It has made the Congregational Churches school-fostering and college-planting, and the institutions of their foundation stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific. No narrow denominational education has been their ideal, but a training, religious in its spirit, but broadly free in its appeal. Yet even this zeal for education, based as it was originally on the conviction that learning in the pulpit and the pew is the surest road to knowledge of divine things, is no exclusive Congregational trait, however pre-eminent Congregationalists in America have been

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in its manifestation. It is part of the common heritage of Calvinism.

So, too, if the influence of Congregationalism in the development of responsible government is considered, it will be found that it stands on the basis of Calvinism. This great service to liberty was a by-product, it may be said, of original Calvinism. Calvin taught that the powers that be are ordained of God. Monarchy, aristocracy or democracy are all good, if well administered. Obedience, complete and entire, is due to the government under which men live, save when its commands conflict with those of God. Then all duty of submission to human authority ceases. Who shall decide when the statutes of prince or of parliament are counter to the Will of God? Calvin never answered that question directly. But the only answer practically possible is that the decision rests with each thinking man, as he weighs the enactments of human authority for himself in the balance with the divine commands. Calvin taught, also, that ministers are in their sacred office with the consent of the congregations that they serve. He never drew the full consequences from that far-reaching principle. Calvinism did. If the pastor serves his flock with its consenting approval, then if he is unworthy of his trust those to whom he has been unfaithful may remove him from his office. And, if those in the church, why not those, also, in civil authority? Are they not responsible to the people whom they

govern, and to be rejected when they govern amiss? Congregationalism entered on this inheritance to the full. It has been a conspicuous factor in making it a common American possession. It was Congregational New England that threw off the yoke of an Andros, and later proclaimed that "taxation without representation is tyranny." Yet here, too, Congregationalism was but enlarging the bounds of the common Calvinistic heritage.

While the Congregational churches have, therefore, in many important respects simply developed the general positions of Calvinism, they have, nevertheless, made their distinct contribution to American civil and religious liberty. One such gift is to be seen in their emphasis upon democracy. As compared with modern democratic developments, the democracy of the founders was, indeed, limited. Samuel Stone, the teacher of the church in Hartford, Conn., was perhaps extreme when he expressed his ideal of the relations of church officers to the congregation over which they were placed as those of "a speaking aristocracy in the face of a silent democracy." But, whatever their limitations, the Congregational churches from the beginning claimed for every member a voice in their affairs. By the votes of the entire membership the minister was chosen to his office; by the same general suffrage members were admitted or disciplined. This was a share in churchly affairs which none of the great com-

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munions of the old world, not even those of the Calvinistic family, had to offer; though a similar participation could be found among the Baptists. It is with the Congregational churches, however, that such democracy first comes into practice in bodies having state recognition, and established in any considerable territory.

The basal constituent element in a Congregational church was, moreover, the mutual covenant by which believers are joined to God and one another. Entrance on such a covenant relationship, in Congregational theory, transforms a company of individual Christians into a church. It is a voluntary agreement, consciously assumed, and involving definite and permanent relationships. It is natural that as men think in ecclesiastical polity so they should conceive civil institutions, and this was eminently true among the founders of New England. When the company in the cabin of the "Mayflower" found themselves in the harbor at the extremity of Cape Cod, beyond the jurisdiction under which they had expected to settle in this new world, and therefore without legal standing, they met the situation by creating a state, as they would a church, by union in a mutual covenant, agreeing by compact to be ruled by "such iust and equall Lawes, Ordinances, acts, constitutions, offices from time to time as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the generall good of the Colony." With such principles abroad, it is no wonder that Thomas Hooker

could declare the doctrine in his famous sermon at Hartford, of May 31, 1638, "that the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God's own allowance"; and that "they who have power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power, also, to set the bounds of the power and place unto which they call them." And the reason of these powers, Hooker affirms is "because the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people." From this message of democracy in church and state the Congregational churches have never swerved. It is probably their greatest contribution to American religious and political life that can be called something other than their Calvinistic inheritance. The Congregational ideal, both in church and state, is that of full-rounded, independent, responsible manhood and womanhood.

A further characteristic of the Congregational view of political life is the New England town system. It would be too much to claim this form of political organization as the direct product of New England ecclesiasticism. Its origin has been, and is still, a bone of historical contention. But there can be no question that it grew up in a region dominated by Congregational ideals, and was the product of similar modes of thought. The New England town is one of the most remarkable of American political entities. A local democracy, controlling its own affairs by the direct vote of all its citizens, completely self-governing within

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its own territory, in all matters of merely local concern, it corresponds in the political sphere to the self-governing Congregational church in the realm of religion. It is ill adapted, as experience has proved, for complex urban conditions, with their great diversities of race, of industries and of wealth. It may be questioned whether the Congregational church is the best form of organization in a similar environment. But, given a fairly homogeneous population, especially one prevalingly agricultural in its occupation, with no great diversities of wealth or of education, there can be no doubt that the New England town has proved a remarkably effective political creation. It has been a rare training-school in democracy. It has produced an independent, intelligent, thoughtful citizenship. It has justified its right to be by its fruits.

The influence of the New England town system has been much wider in America than the region of its actual adoption. Without pressing too far the claim that this or that state contributed the pattern of our national union, it is evident that the relation of the states one to another in the federal constitution is very similar to that of town to town in the old New England colonies. This resemblance is more than a mere coincidence. If it is being profoundly modified by the development of larger problems now facing the whole country, the experience is being but repeated on a national scale through which the town system has been pass-

ing, but to recognize the facts of the present is not to deny the great educative value of the system in the past or its remarkable adaptation to much of American political history. It has given its most distinctive political feature to the development of the United States.

Were one to claim for Congregationalism a leadership in certain important fields, the claim would have a measure of historic justice, yet the spirit of such movements was so in the atmosphere and was so early caught by other American bodies of Christians, as to give no exclusive quality to their furtherance. Such a field is that of Missions. Congregational missions began in 1646 with the labors of John Eliot for the Christianization and civilization of the Massachusetts Indians. His efforts were the immediate cause of the formation of the first English missionary society, the "President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England," chartered by the Long Parliament in 1649. So, too, the first great American Foreign Missionary Society, the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," of 1810, was of Congregational origin. But one does not forget the wide extended missions of the Roman Church in America, beginning far earlier than those of Congregationalism; and if, among Protestants, Congregationalism was a leader, others speedily bore the torch.

Much the same thing may be said regarding the

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anti-slavery movement. It was a Congregational judge, Samuel Sewall of Massachusetts, who protested against the bondage of his fellow-men in his "On the Selling of Joseph" of 1700, thus becoming the author of the first American anti-slavery appeal. They were two Congregational ministers of Rhode Island, Samuel Hopkins and Ezra Stiles, who organized a society, in 1773, the purpose of which was to train and send colored missionaries to Africa. It was the same Samuel Hopkins, sternest of New England Calvinists, who, in 1776, put forth a "Dialogue concerning the Slavery of the Africans; shewing it to be the Duty and Interest of the American States to emancipate all their African Slaves." By no accident was William Ellery Channing one of Hopkins' hearers and friends. But others, also, were enlisted for the cause of the slave, and American Congregationalism would claim no more than that it had an early and an honorable part in the contest which prepared the way for emancipation, and that since freedom has been achieved it has borne its full share in efforts for the Christianization and elevation of the enfranchised race.

A larger claim for Congregationalism may be made when it is asserted that it has fostered the spirit of free inquiry in matters of religion. The founders of New England crossed the Atlantic on no doctrinal issue. They were in full agreement, theologically, with the great Calvinist party of England and Scotland. To it and to them re-

ligion meant the same thing. When triumphant Calvinism in the home land formulated its famous Confession of Faith at Westminster, they were rejoiced to approve it as "very holy, orthodox, and judicious." They felt no doctrinal gulf between those whom they had left in England and themselves. It was only on questions of church-organization and government,—questions of the utmost importance, indeed, in their estimate,—that they were at disagreement with those from whom they had come out. Yet even from the first there were signs of a spirit different from that which English and Scottish Calvinism manifested. John Robinson had charged the embarking Pilgrims, in 1620, "to follow him no farther than he followed Christ; and if God should reveal anything by other instruments of His, to be as ready to receive it as ever . . . to receive any truth by his ministry; for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy word." It may be, as some have claimed, that in thus speaking Robinson had polity alone in mind; but even so the utterance was of almost prophetic significance.

To Congregational thinking each local church has the right to formulate its confession of faith in words of its own choosing. It has never bound its disciples to ancient formulas or required assent to "historic creeds." Possibly Congregationalism has been one sided in this emphasis. The churches of this order have not always shown

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that sense of the "historic continuity" of Christianity that is due. It is well, we may believe, that other strands have gone into the loom of our American Christianity, and that it includes, also, those to whom the ancient and historic aspects of our faith are preëminently dear. But here, too, Congregationalism surely has its place and its mission. Congregationalism has always been, in the best sense of the word, rationalistic. It has revered the Scriptures, but it has been convinced that no interpretation of their message, or system of Christian faith, which does not justify itself at the bar of severe intellectual examination can be true. Hence New England gave to America in the school of Edwards of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the only great original reinterpretation of Calvinism that this land has produced. They were giants who battled in those days; but the weapons of their warfare were those of the intellect, and if their sons have ceased to follow them, it is because their premises and their arguments no longer carry conviction to the mind as once they did.

It is the same freedom of investigation and appeal to intellectual conviction that appears on both sides in the one great division which the Congregational churches have experienced,—the Unitarian separation of the early nineteenth century. Each of these contesting parties in this struggle believed that its conclusions were those which alone were rationally defensible; and

each used very similar processes of argument. If we of a century later believe both parties in this contest were in many respects in error in method and conclusions, it is not because we doubt their intellectual sincerity or discredit the courage with which they dared to attack the fundamental problems of our faith.

That spirit of open mindedness still continues to characterize the Congregational churches. They have welcomed as freely as have any ecclesiastical communions in America the results of Biblical and historical criticism which have been in many ways so revolutionary of theological thinking within the last generation. They have no fear that truth can be a peril; but they are also conservative enough to wish to be sure that it is truth that asks for admission. For them the Apostolic injunction "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" might well be taken as a watchword. This open-mindedness of spirit is one of the chiefest of the contributions of Congregationalism to American religious life.

The Congregational churches have never asserted, even in their earliest and most polemic days, that they are the only churches of Christ. They are far from so believing at the present. They gladly recognize the value of other, and widely divergent, types of the Christian faith. It is well that our American religious life traces its streams from many sources. But that Congregationalism has contributed elements of impor-

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tance and of abiding worth they are confident, and they believe that their confidence is justified by the history and the present status of American Christianity.

III

THE FRIENDS' CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

O. EDWARD JANNEY, M.D.

In studying the influence of the people called Quakers on civil and religious liberty in America, their sturdy opposition to civil and religious oppression in the mother country must be taken into consideration. This quality they carried over to the New World. It is recorded that during twenty-five years of the reign of Charles the Second, 13,562 Quakers were imprisoned, 198 were transported over seas as slaves, and 338 died in prison or of wounds received while being dragged from religious assemblies. Such experiences seemed only to increase the ardor of men and women who believed themselves to be divinely led, and to whom persecution only set the seal of divine approbation on their faithfulness.

Nor was it an easy task for the English authorities to suppress Quakerism in their realm. To break up an ordinary religious gathering it was necessary only to remove the preacher or the Bible; but in a Friends' meeting, if the minister were removed, others at once took his place, and for

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this reason, in order to suppress the meeting everyone present had to be thrown into prison. Even then they preached through the windows, and converted people who were passing along the street.

Under the circumstances it was inevitable that the Quakers should turn their eyes toward the New Continent, as a place where, with those of other sects who were suffering persecution in the Old World, they could worship God in peace and security. News soon reached them, however, that the same spirit of persecution to which they had been subjected in England was rife in the new land; and then there arose a strong purpose in many of the Quakers to visit the Colonies in a spirit of protest.

They came. They were not wanted, but they came. The welcome that they received may be judged by the wording of one of the first laws of Massachusetts directed against them: "There is a cursed sect of heretics lately risen up in the world which are commonly called Quakers, who take upon themselves to be immediately sent of God, and infallibly assisted by the Spirit to speak and write blasphemous opinions, displeasing to God and the order of God in church and commonwealth."

In the southern colonies, the Quakers, for the most part, suffered little persecution for their religious opinions, and through their firm and consistent demands for religious liberty for all men, made such an impression upon the authorities,

that the privilege or right of freedom of worship granted to them in the first place, in the course of time, and partly through the efforts of the Quakers, was extended to all men.

In Pennsylvania, religious liberty was the foundation stone of Penn's government. The Friends who laid the foundations for New Jersey determined to eliminate from that section all danger of religious persecution. "Many of the little company who established that colony had lain in loathsome English jails. They had proved their faithfulness; had borne their persecutions patiently. Justified by years of hardship, now they longed for the wider outlook which provided a secure home for their children in the future. 'I wish,' wrote one of them, 'that they that come after may remember these things.' 'The settlement of this country,' says another witness, 'was directed by an impulse on the spirit of God's people, not for their own ease and tranquillity, but rather for the posterity which should come after them.'" (R. M. Jones.)

In Maryland the spirit of the brave old martyr Wenlock Christison, who had been under the sentence of death in Boston, and only escaped through the arrival of the missive of King Charles ordering the release of the Quakers, and who later settled on the Eastern shore of Maryland, gathered about him a rapidly-growing band, every one of whom was in sympathy with the liberal policy of Lord Baltimore.

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It may surprise some to know that for a hundred years, Quakers had control of the affairs of Rhode Island, and elected Quaker Governors from 1666 to 1714, and from 1721 to 1774, during which time religious liberty was assured.

In all of these colonies, and to a considerable extent in the other southern colonies, religious liberty was implanted in the fundamental law, partly through the influence of Friends, in the spirit of these words of William Penn: "Thus we lay a foundation for after ages to understand their liberty as men and Christians, that they may not be brought into bondage but by their own consent. No person to be called in question or molested for his conscience, or for worship according to his conscience."

The story of the treatment of the Quakers by the Massachusetts Colony is one of the most striking and instructive in American history. The coming to that locality of those quiet-mannered men and women aroused an astonishing and active opposition that, perhaps, can be explained only by the world-old conflict between tyranny and democracy. For the Quakers were democrats. They advocated the rights of the people against arbitrary civil and religious tyranny; and thus there arose at once a spirit of opposition on the part of the Massachusetts authorities that was destined to give rise to persecution even to death. Three men and one woman suffered death by hanging on Boston Common, while many others were

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publicly whipped, stripped, even the women, from the waist up, and others were mutilated and imprisoned.

But this persecution was finally to break down, partly through the effect of the gentle and Christian behavior of the victims, and partly through the natural repugnance aroused by such cruel treatment. The laws against Quakers were gradually made milder, and were finally abolished in 1724. The gentle spirit of the martyr, Mary Dyer, prevailed in the end. After being reprieved and banished she returned to Boston on the 21st of May, 1660, and was brought before the Governor. "Are you the same Mary Dyer that was here before?" asked Endicott. "I am the same." "You will own yourself to be a Quaker, will you not?" "I own myself to be reproachfully so called." Then followed the sentence of death by hanging. Mary Dyer then said, "This is no more than what thou saidst before." "But now," said the Governor, "it is to be executed." "I came," she said solemnly, "in obedience to the will of God, at your last General Court, desiring you to repeal your unrighteous laws of banishment on pain of death; and that same is my word now, and earnest request, although I told you that if you refused to repeal them, the Lord would send others of His servants to witness against them." At the foot of the gallows she testified, "In obedience to the will of the Lord God I came and in His will I abide faithful unto death," and then with words about

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her eternal happiness she went to meet Him "in whose image she shined" here below.

Is it not fair to claim, in view of these historical facts, that the Quakers exerted a mighty influence over the colonies from Massachusetts to the Carolinas in favor of the religious liberty which now blesses our land, and which has been incorporated into the fundamental law of every State, and also into the Constitution of the Federal Union?

It is an interesting fact that Quaker influence was paramount in civil affairs for some hundred years in Rhode Island, The Jerseys and Pennsylvania; and was distinctly felt in the southern provinces.

In Maryland, Lord Baltimore complained in 1681 to the Assembly, that, "moved by the clamours of the Quakers," he was resolved henceforth to publish to the people the proceedings of all of the Assemblies — surely one of their rights. That there were Quaker members of the Assemblies is shown by a rebuke administered by Lord Baltimore in a speech before the Assembly in which he censures certain members for "rudely presuming to come before his lordship with their hats on." However, in Maryland, as in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, Friends came to think it was safer to keep out of politics, and they thenceforth contented themselves with sending petitions to the Legislature instead of members — a loss to the Colonies as well as to the Society of Friends itself. (R. M. Jones.)

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But the "Holy Experiment in Government" of William Penn constitutes the most instructive and important exercise of Quaker influence in the direction of the establishment of civil liberty in America. "The idea of a Commonwealth devoted to liberty and peace drew out the best powers of Penn's comprehensive and enthusiastic intellect. There was no room in Europe, but in the great unoccupied expanse of the New World he would carry out his ideals with a selected community in sympathy with them, of a serious and honest sort, to whom he would transfer the governmental power and realty rights he had purchased of the Crown, reserving only such moderate share of each as security for the future and family interests would justify. It was a glorious conception and a no less glorious opportunity, and we find him continually tempering his natural ardor by considerations of duty to God and man, as the seriousness of the task and the risks of failure pressed themselves upon him.

Penn's argument was that the moral law was transcendent to all decrees of King and legislatures, and to all supposed exigencies of circumstances. "No conditions permitted its annulment. No necessities were so great as to justify its abrogation. It was the All-wise Creator's law upon which all right human conduct must be based. It could not always be accurately determined, but when known, it was imperative; and so to fight evil with evil was, in the long run, only to postpone the

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victory of truth and to pile up trouble for the future. Fight, fight continuously and without flinching, but do not play into the hands of iniquity by substituting one form for another — this was the influence of William Penn ; ” and ought to have been the outcome of his experiment in Pennsylvania.

“ The influence of Friendly ideas upon American institutions has been great. It is quite possible that these institutions have drawn more from the principles brought over in the *Welcome* than from the intellectual freightage of any other ship ; that of all the colonial founders William Penn saw more truly than any other the line on which the future would develop ; that himself and his collaborators builded more wisely than any others when they reared a State devoted to democracy, liberty and peace.” (R. M. Jones.)

The charter of Pennsylvania of 1701 was based on the principles of true democracy. The first article grants liberty of conscience to all who “ Confess and acknowledge Almighty God ; and grants to all who believe in Jesus Christ the right to hold executive and legislative offices.”

The second provides for an Assembly to be chosen yearly by the free men ; to consist of four or more persons from each county. This Assembly to have full power to choose its officers, to judge of the qualifications of its own members, to adjourn itself, to make laws, to impeach criminals and redress grievances, “ with all other powers and

privileges of an Assembly according to the rights of freeborn subjects of England." Herein, then, lies the germ of the Constitutions of most of our States, and some of the important provisions of the Federal Constitution.

The influence of Friends on the laws governing oaths, military services, the payment of church tithes, temperance, and social vice has been extensive, although, in the nature of the case, the extent cannot be ascertained.

There can be no doubt, however, that the abolition of human slavery in America was greatly hastened through the efforts and self-sacrifice of many Friends. They were put into a cruel position by the coming on of the Civil War, brought on in part by their fervent advocacy of human liberty, and whose horrors and evils they deeply deplored.

Friends, with rare exceptions, have withdrawn from active participation in politics, they have not increased in numbers in this country; their advocacy of Quakerism has been very gentle; but may it not be that through them has been placed in the mass of our people a divine leaven that is helping to produce those great movements that are sweeping humanity along in the direction of civil and religious liberty, simplicity and purity of life?

IV

THE JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO REFORM JUDAISM)

H. G. ENLOW, D.D.

Professor Ruffini, in his work on Religious Liberty, reminds us that religious liberalism and religious liberty have not always gone together. "There have been most fervid believers who have been in every way favorable to religious liberty, as well as utterly prejudiced free-thinkers who have been absolutely against it." For illustrations we are not limited to records of the past. Unfortunately, we can find them in our own everyday experience. Bad as is fanaticism anywhere, it is worst when found in conjunction with liberalism. A liberal employing the weapons of the fanatic is a tragic sight.

None the less, the promotion of religious and civil liberty has been due largely to liberalism; and for obvious reasons. Though it is possible for one to be liberal and yet adhere to the general religious organization, liberalism as a rule has involved dissent, and dissenters have always had to battle for recognition and freedom. In fighting for their own

religious liberty, it was almost inevitable that they should fight for the principle of religious liberty in general, and for the extension of its rule. The Socinians, the Baptists, and other dissenting sects could not demand toleration for themselves without benefiting fellow-dissenters. Thus, those who have fought the most for their own religious and civil freedom, have wrought the most for its general establishment.

Reform Judaism owes a great deal both to the ideas of liberalism and the principle of religious liberty. If it is an expression, on the one hand, of religious liberalism, it is, on the other, the child of religious liberty. Some trace the ascendancy of political and civil liberty in Europe to the American Revolution. If this geneology is correct, Reform Judaism even in its origin was indebted to America. Liberals have never been wanting in Israel. There were always Jewish teachers to whom the essentials of their religion meant more than the accidentals, the permanent principles more than the transient forms, the spirit more than the letter. The Prophets are the true prototypes of Jewish liberalism. But organized Reform Judaism, the Reform synagogue, came into existence as a result of the political and civil emancipation of the Jew; and this emancipation was an important part of the general progress of religious liberty. When Western Europe extended to the Jew the rights of citizenship, coupled with the right to follow his own conscience and judgment in his religious life, it

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marked a triumph for religious liberty, as well as the inauguration of a new era for Judaism. Reform Judaism was a self-adaptation of Judaism to the new conditions. It was the child of political liberalism in Europe, without which it could not have come into existence, and it has reached its highest degree of development in America, because here it has enjoyed the largest measure of freedom. And freedom has been essential to its growth.

But the Jewish contribution to religious and civil liberty in the United States has been independent of any consideration of orthodoxy or reform. In this respect there has been no division in Israel. As long as the Jew has lived in this country — and his history goes back to the earliest period — he is known to have fought on the side of civil and religious liberty. And it was natural for him to do so. First, the whole history of the Jew has made him a spontaneous champion of freedom. "For ye were slaves in the land of Egypt!" More than any other being the Jew has suffered from fanaticism, and it would have been exceedingly strange if the recollection of his own fate had failed to make him a foe of every form of religious intolerance. In addition, he did not find even on this Continent a general recognition of the principle of religious liberty, and in several instances he had to fight hard before it was extended to him. Thus, long before the arrival of Reform Judaism to these shores, we find Jews exerting themselves in behalf of religious and civil

liberty. But whatever they gained for themselves in that direction, was not without effect upon the triumph of the principle of liberty in general.

Let me remind you of some noteworthy incidents in the course of this struggle. Consider, first, the well-known case of Asser Levy. The first considerable settlement of Jews within the bounds of what now forms the United States occurred in New Amsterdam in the year 1654. In the very following year, Governor Stuyvesant was ordered to attack the Swedes on the Delaware. A number of Jews seem to have offered to serve, but were summarily rejected. The Governor and his Council passed an ordinance prohibiting Jews from serving as soldiers, but taxing them instead with a monthly contribution for exemption. The Jews, under the leadership of Asser Levy, promptly refused to pay and asked for the privilege to stand guard like other burghers, or to be relieved from the tax. The petition was rejected with the comment that if the petitioners were not satisfied with the law, they might go elsewhere. Asser Levy took an appeal to Holland, which was acted upon favorably, and he was subsequently permitted to do guard duty like other citizens. When two years later the burgher right was made a prerequisite for certain trading privileges, Asser Levy requested to be admitted as a burgher. The officials of the court were surprised that a Jew should make such an application, but Levy persisted, asserting that "he kept watch and ward"

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like other burghers and was entitled to the same privileges, which were finally granted by the Governor. This was in the year 1657, thirteen years after Roger Williams had published his great book against religious persecutions and just ten years after the appearance of Milton's book on religious liberty. Levy's victory was of particular importance to the Jews of the Colony, but it had its larger significance to the rest of the people as a step in the progress of religious liberty. Vigorous as Levy was in the championship of his rights as a Jew, he maintained cordial relations with non-Jewish fellow-citizens, and in the year 1671 we see him advance the money for the construction of the first Lutheran Church in New York, just as in the year 1711 we hear of the Jews of the city, including the rabbi, making a substantial contribution toward building the steeple of Trinity Church. Thus, early in their career, the Jews of this Commonwealth taught the lesson that true liberalism means a combination of devotion to one's own faith with respect for the faith of one's fellows.

Asser Levy's conduct has been followed by American Jews in general. They have contended for their rights and responsibilities as citizens, for the principle that their faith should form no hindrance to the enjoyment of their political and civil rights and the exercise of their duties, in a word for the principle of separation of church and state. Forming a minority, they particularly appreciate the importance of this principle. But what-

ever victory the struggle has brought them, has been not only for themselves, but for all American citizens.

Consider, for example, the case of Maryland. It was the activity of Jewish citizens that led to the adoption of the principle of universal religious liberty in that state. For, even after the constitution of 1776 had laid down the religious rights of all, public office in Maryland could be held only by such as subscribed to the Christian religion. From 1797 on, Jewish citizens made a strong fight, lasting for a generation, for the removal of that provision. In 1825 an Act of Assembly was finally passed abolishing it, and the two Jews most active in the struggle were, the year following, elected members of the city council of Baltimore. As a result of that struggle the Constitution of Maryland was at first modified specifically in favor of Jews—the only instance of the kind in American history—but further modifications were made later on for the benefit of all non-Christians. This is the only instance in American history, as has been said, “where the establishment of a fundamental constitutional principle can be credited to the specific labors of individual Jews.”

However, there is little room for doubt that the Jewish element made itself felt also in the struggle which resulted in the passage of the Act for Religious Freedom in Virginia. We know what pride Jefferson took in this Act, prepared by him seven years before its adoption; what a source of true

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pride it is to every Virginian. The Act establishing religious freedom was not passed, however, without a sharp contest. Another measure, which would have curtailed the rights of every non-Christian citizen, first had to be defeated. It was proposed to have a universal tax "for the support of teachers of the Gospel." Introduced in 1784, this measure gained considerable popularity, and would have passed but for the strong opposition organized and led by Madison. Assiduous labor and eloquent appeal on the part of the latter stopped the enactment of a law which would have compelled every Jew and other non-Christian to contribute to the support of other people's churches, would have restricted the freedom of opinion and conscience, and deflowered Virginia of the chief beauty of American civilization.

Recent studies lead to the conclusion that the influence of the Jewish population of Virginia with Madison and his fellow-workers was responsible to some extent for the vigor with which the obnoxious measure was fought. The Jews were a concrete example of the injustice it would entail. "The leaders of the Virginia movement," says an historian, "had been brought repeatedly into personal contact with zealous and self-sacrificing Jewish co-workers in the struggle for American independence. They knew and appreciated them and their efforts." Haym Salomon, for example, to quote from the manuscript of Jared Sparks, "extended during the Revolutionary struggle to

the immortal delegation from Virginia, namely, Arthur Lee, Theodore Bland, Joseph Jones, John F. Mercer, and Eden Randolph, liberal supplies of timely and pecuniary aid, and we find it declared by one of the most accomplished, most learned, and patriotic members of the succeeding sessions of the Revolutionary legislature, James Madison, that when the pecuniary resources of the members of Congress, both public and private, were cut off, recourse was had to Mr. Salomon for means to answer their current expenses, and he was always found extending his friendly hand." Madison, likewise, was personally the recipient of frequent kindnesses from Salomon, which must have disposed him toward friendship for the Jews. Besides, there is evidence that Virginia at the time contained a considerable Jewish element, who no doubt exerted their influence against the Assessment Act and in favor of the Act for Religious Freedom.

From those early days to this, the Jew has kept up the fight for a complete separation of church and state, not only where his own interests were involved, but also those of other American citizens. And it may be safely stated that he has never won a victory for himself without benefiting the cause of religious liberty. Perhaps there are some people, for example, who consider the recent abrogation of the Russian treaty on account of Russia's discrimination against American Jews as a purely Jewish victory; but, as a matter of fact, it is a general American triumph,

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one of the most important incidents in the annals of religious liberty, a vindication of the principle of civil and religious freedom to which future generations will point with pride and as an inspiration. If the Jew was the direct cause of the incident, he has by his labor and struggle accomplished something for the common cause. Similarly, the Jew has stood for everything conducive to civil and religious liberty, and above all the maintenance of the fundamental democratic principle of complete separation of church and state, because none is better able to appreciate the necessity and the benefits of such freedom than he. The untold tragedy of the Jew has been due to the cruelty of man to man in the domain of religion, which was made possible only by the combination of religious fanaticism with political power. A people that bears in its heart the memory of Haman and Antiochus, of Torquemada and Pobiedonostzeff, may be counted on as an opponent of political fanaticism and champion of religious liberty as long as it remains loyal to its ideals.

That Reform Judaism should be devoted to this particular cause follows from the very nature of its history and character. I have already spoken of the historical connection between Reform Judaism and liberalism. As for its character, defining it in terms of loyalty, it may be said to be based on three phases of loyalty: First, loyalty to the essentials of the old faith, as proclaimed by the Prophets and illumined by our teachers.

Secondly, loyalty to the divine spirit within man, by means of which our religious understanding is continuously developed and broadened. And, thirdly, loyalty to the society of which we form a part. In conformity with these principles, every liberal Jew will ever be found in the ranks of those whose great aim is to maintain in this country and to extend to other countries those conditions of civil and religious liberty which have proven such a blessing in the past.

V

THE METHODIST CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

LEWIS MARSHALL LOUNSBURY

As one studies this whole field one becomes convinced that the concept of liberty is a most desirable and valuable one, but that the functioning of it in practical affairs is exceedingly difficult. Methodism is a part of the great Protestant movement, which advanced wave after wave through the generations, each crest of the wave taking some new era of life and claiming it for liberty and for progress. The retreat of the wave is always due to the conservative reaction, due to the fear on the part of the discoverers of freedom that those who follow them will not follow exactly in their wake. Liberty is a mysterious and perilous thing, the reformer thinks, and as soon as he himself has come to liberty he desires that all who follow after him shall walk in his footsteps. In order to give a tolerably interesting or profitable address upon the contribution of Methodism to civil and religious liberty, I think it will first be necessary to be a little biographical.

In the year 1703, in the rectory at Epworth,

was born a boy by the name of John Wesley. He grew up in the home of a priest of the Anglican church; he went to Oxford and there became a profoundly religious student, gathering about himself in his post-graduate days a club of men called the Holy Club, and these men, all of them, were under the influence of the Church of England, with its liturgy and formalism. There was a certain tyranny to it that they were restless under, and they were seeking by prayer and by study of the Scriptures somehow to get out into a larger place. John Wesley came to Georgia in 1736 as a missionary to the Indians, and those of you who have read his experiences there remember that it was a disappointing epoch in his life. He was an ascetic, a ritualist, a formalist, and, endeavoring to teach religion to the people in Georgia, he exhibited the darker aspects of ritualism and formalism, but all the while in the man's soul was a desire to get free; and he returns from Georgia, as he comes in sight of Land's End, with this confession upon his heart: "I went out to Georgia to convert the Indians, but who shall convert me?" At thirty-five years of age there was a consciousness in his soul that he was more or less of a failure, that he had not found the fountains of life, he had not entered into the springs of moral and spiritual freedom, and returning to London under great distress of mind, desiring almost to leave the priesthood and quit preaching, he comes in contact with a man named Peter

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Böhler, and Böhler begins to point out to this man the way of peace by faith. He lingers for a long while before he comes to the point of self-surrender, but one evening in Aldersgate street, London, while a layman was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, John Wesley feels his heart strangely warmed. It is an experience as old as that of Abraham; he wrestles that he may have peace, that he may come into living contact with the eternal reality; and in that experience of John Wesley, as he comes personally to drink of the fountain of life, is born much that is true and beautiful and progressive in the denomination which I have the honor to represent this morning.

Professor Eucken makes the remark in his book on "The Truth of Religion" that great religious leaders are men who open the fountains of life for men. John Wesley had found the fountain and he went forth under its inspiration, and believed that he had a message for men and women who were dwelling in the twilight of ritualism and liturgy, and preached a gospel to the masses. The following Sunday morning after his conversion he went to St. John's at Bloomsbury and told something about the new life that had come to his soul, and he preached again in the evening. He is immediately exiled by the ritualists of the Anglican Church. He preaches in a chapel once here and there, but immediately they tell him, "never more." There is life in the man's experience, and a hunger for the masses in his soul that they may know

God, that they may come in contact with eternal verities, that they may find unity between themselves and their Creator: and so this man who has found life, goes forth to preach from his experience and to tell men of the three great doctrines, that are by no manner of means original, for they are a part of the great Protestant theology. First, that of justification by faith, of salvation by self-surrender to the spirit of God; second, an assurance of acceptance, that a man may know that he has come into harmony with the Divine Spirit; third, what he calls perfection or sanctification; we of modern day might term it the perfectability of human nature. As I say, those were not original contributions to theological thought. Methodism was not an original contributor to dogmatic thought, but rather a great effort to open the fountains of life to men, the great elemental experiences with the Divine Being, by faith, that make for the progress of the individual in its search for light and life and God.

Now Wesley preached that gospel outside the church. They drove him outside, and the story of his struggle is oft repeated, when at five and six in the morning, as the miners are going to their work, he gathers them by the thousand out in the field and preaches a gospel that the mass of men can understand, and dark furrowed faces, heavy with coal dust and grime, are aglow with a joy that cannot be dispelled, because they at last realize that someone has come to them with a gospel that

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they *can* understand and that shall save them. So that Methodism is no new dogmatic faith, but rather it is a bringing the life of God near to the soul of men. As I have remarked, it was a movement of freedom from an ecclesiastical formalism. Wesley goes into the field preaching and so drifts loose, as it were, from all that is purely Anglican.

So that I would say that in the first place the contribution of Methodism to religious liberty was a contribution to freedom outside of and beyond ecclesiastical ritualism or formalism. It went for life, and for the man where he lived. The second thing I would say is, that it gave emphasis to the great liberty loving movement in the church, which was before Wesley, and has been technically called Arminianism. Wesley was an Arminian, a profound believer in the freedom of the soul under the grace of God to choose its own destiny. Wesley broke with the Calvinists in 1741 when he and George Whitefield disagreed on the matter, and they separated. In 1741, you remember, in this country Jonathan Edwards preached that tremendous sermon of his on "Sinners in the hands of an angry God," at a little country church in Massachusetts. That is an interesting bit of reading. Whitefield himself was with Edwards in that same year, 1741, previous to his break with Wesley on the matter of Arminianism. Whitefield remained in this country, labored in this country, year after year, a Calvinist, but at this

point I presume I would be justified in saying that Jonathan Edwards was the last great giant of the old days who held for a militant and thorough-going Calvinism. There came after that revival under Edwards, a great reaction, and some twenty years later, in the year 1769, Wesley sent two of his preachers to this country to begin the forming and the furthering of the gospel as he had been preaching it up and down the island of Great Britain; so that Methodism thus comes over into this country with its preachers, with an Arminian theology in the main, and preached the same gospel to the masses of men that Wesley himself felt, bringing living souls nearer to the living God.

On its civil side, on the side of *civil* liberty, as has been hinted by Professor Rauschenbusch, Wesley was not much in favor of the liberty of the masses. He wrote a very fiery letter against the whole matter of the Revolution. He was a Tory in his sympathies. But we must remember that his preachers came into this country just previous to the Revolutionary War, and perhaps were not appreciative of the great struggle that was being then made; but in their love for God, for liberty of soul and liberty of action, the Methodists became a great leavening power, and increased after the Revolution with great rapidity, bulwarking and establishing every good thing that made for liberty and freedom.

At their first general conference was asked this question: What shall be done with a man who

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buys or sells slaves? And the answer was, He shall be expelled from the communion unless he buys them for the sake of giving them freedom.

Bishop Coke, who was sent over here as a general superintendent by John Wesley, and Mr. Asbury, who was elected a bishop or general superintendent by the first general conference of our church, held in 1784, went to George Washington and interviewed him concerning the feasibility of the emancipation of the slaves in this country, asking him to sign a petition favoring their emancipation. President Washington did not think it expedient to sign the petition for the emancipation of slaves, but said that if the Assembly took it up he would be glad to express his opinion that it was a wise and proper thing to do.

In the year 1844 the Methodist Church, then numbering seven hundred thousand members in this country, split on the subject of slavery, north and south of the Mason and Dixon line. Some four hundred thousand people withdrew then and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Those in the North held that slavery was an iniquitous institution and maintained themselves in what is now known as the Methodist Episcopal Church. One of the documents Methodism holds dear is a letter of Lincoln, given to Bishop Ames and three other ministers, who interviewed Lincoln in 1864, pledging him their support in the dark hours of the Civil War. This letter of commenda-

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tion and appreciation of the loyalty of the Methodist Church in its Northern section to the cause of the American Republic is an heirloom in our Methodist history.

It is difficult, perhaps, to say in the concrete where and at what time Methodism has made its contributions to the liberty of this country, except as every man who comes into conscious experience of God's grace and love goes forth everywhere, up and down the land, to be himself a free man and be identified with every good thing that makes for God, for truth, and for the advancement of the human race. In these masses of the Methodist people, who to-day number in the two great divisions of the church, north and south, something like five million people in the church and something like four million five hundred thousand in the Sunday Schools, whose young people crowd themselves, some seventy-five thousand of them, in three hundred or more educational institutions, Methodism is naturally the foe of every tyranny, social, ecclesiastical and political, and is doing its share and carrying its burden for the progress of the human race, in these better days. As to the Methodism of the present hour, possibly no one is competent to say what its contribution is. The Methodist Church, together with all Protestant denominations, stands staggering, stands perplexed, in the midst of the tremendous social tides and upheavals that are upon us, a changing order of things in this present

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moment, which causes all religious denominations to, as it were, mark time until we shall more clearly get our bearings and understand what is best to do. It is a time when a man, if he is to speak with any degree of intelligence, must draw near to humanity as humanity is living out its life. The man who is purely academic, whose liberality is scholastic, whose intellectualism is a snobbishness and an aristocracy, is perfectly and utterly contemptible these days. The only solution that can possibly be made of the great problems of human life and liberty to-day must be made by the man who is near to humanity, who feels the heart throb, the desperate anxiety, the pitiful pathos of human sorrow and sin. One may easily withdraw into the quiet of the cloister and present programmes, intellectual and aristocratic, but the only man who *knows* is the man who is near the human heart and life, and feels the dreadful struggle of humanity towards righteousness and peace. So if there is one thing to-day, it seems to me, we need, it is that we shall draw near to the actual human life where it is being lived, that we shall *feel* the struggle of all men who are trying somewhere, somehow, to find God. The important thing after all, the main contribution that you and I may make, is that we ourselves go forth to help solve these problems of actual men and women living in the actual every day modern conditions. We stand to-day in this Hebrew synagogue; and I

remember a great Hebrew who one day came to a Hebrew synagogue where he was brought up as a boy, and he opened the Scriptures to Isaiah, and he read some words like this: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," and closing the book he said to that group of people: "This day is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears." And the man, the liberal, the worker for humanity to-day, who shall demand our applause and our praise, is the man who is down close to human sorrow and human struggle, it is he to whom those immortal words apply, and who can say, "The spirit of the Lord hath anointed *me* to release the captive and preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

God's good day is marching on. In vain the present calls unto the past; for the past is dead unto our cry. Westward the world rolls into light, which is coming daybreak everywhere. We need more and more of confidence in one another, more and more of charity and kindness towards one another, less and less of dogmas, concerning which few of us understand, and more and more of that spirit that goes forth to bear the sorrows and sins and toils of human life and bring men near to God.

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He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never
call retreat.

He is sifting out the hearts of men before His
judgment seat.

Be swift, my soul, to answer Him, be jubilant my
feet.

Our God is marching on.

VI

THE PRESBYTERIAN CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

PAUL MOORE STRAYER

"Historians have not attached sufficient importance to the influence of religions on the development or restraint of political liberty," says Professor Paul Frederick of the University of Ghent. It is not our task to correct this defect of history. We are not asked to show the influence of religion upon politics, but only to point out the special contribution of certain religious ideas and doctrines as held and promulgated by various groups of religious people.

The Christian religion heartily accepted and honestly practiced makes straight for brotherhood, and brotherhood is democratic. But self-government antedates Christianity, and even after the beginning of the Christian era it was slow in making headway. In ancient Greece and Rome we have excellent examples of popular government. After the Christian truth of brotherhood had been proclaimed, it did not quickly work itself into the political life and civil government. In the middle ages there were many communes in Europe which

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were self governing, particularly in Italy. Citizens of Florence, Venice, Genoa and Milan met in the open air and regulated their own affairs by universal direct suffrage. But still the idea of self government had taken no large hold upon Christendom.

With the fifteenth century great nations arose, and there was ushered in another period of imperial centralization. When Luther revolted from Rome absolutism was the rule. No such thing as popular government was left in Europe save in the small, remote Swiss cantons. And Luther did not revolt against the political order of his day. Luther accepted the rights of the sovereign and relied upon the princes as his backers. They made his reformation possible. He emancipated the conscience but not the citizen.

At the very moment when self government had nearly expired in Europe, Calvin came on the scene with his new interpretation of Christianity. Now this, according to D'Aubigné, "is what distinguishes the reformation of Calvin from that of Luther, that wherever it was established it brought with it not only truth but liberty." Calvin not only set free the conscience but liberated the church from temporal power and established a religious organization which was self-governing and wholly free from the hierarchy. Each parish was a tiny republic with universal suffrage, electing its own officers and administering its own affairs.

Anyone who is acquainted with the Geneva of

Calvin's time will recognize that individual liberty was curtailed by the jurisdiction of the church which extended its discipline so as to cover the details of conduct in personal and domestic life. And yet, as the antagonists of Calvinism acknowledge, it has powerfully promoted the cause of civil liberty. The first reason is that a very definite boundary line was drawn between the church and the state. "Calvinism," as Professor Fisher says, "rescued the peculiar functions of the church from civil authority." Calvinism contended that the church and not the government should regulate the administration of the sacrament and admit or reject communicants, and won out in Geneva for the first time in the reformation period. "In this feature Calvinism differed from the relation of the civil rulers to the Church, as established under the auspices of Zwingli, as well as of Luther, and from the Anglican system which originated under Henry VIII."

"A second reason why Calvinism has been favorable to civil liberty," here I quote again from Professor Fisher, "is found in the republican character of its church organization. Laymen shared power with ministers. The people, the body of the congregation, took an active and responsible part in the choice of the clergy, and of all other officers. At Geneva, the alliance of the church with the civil authority, and the circumstances in which Calvin was placed, reduced to a considerable extent the real power of the people in church affairs. Calvin

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did not realize his own theory. But elsewhere, especially in countries where Calvinism had to encounter the hostility of the State, the democratic tendencies of the system had full room for development. Men who were accustomed to rule themselves in the church, would claim the same privilege in the commonwealth."

But above all other influences which made for civil liberty stand the theological doctrines of the great Genevan teacher. Luther in his doctrine of consubstantiation left divine grace closely tied to the sacraments. Calvin laid supreme stress upon divine sovereignty and free grace and maintained that salvation is not dependent upon any external rites or ceremonies, but wholly and solely upon the unrestricted grace of God. Calvinism left the individual man alone in the presence of his God. Not through the church's sacraments, nor through any righteousness of his own, but by the sovereign will of God was a man to be saved. One man stood before God no better than another so far as his earthly possessions and attainments were concerned. All trappings of royalty, all advantages of birth or fortune, all special privilege, counted for nothing before the decrees of God. Each stood a naked soul in the presence of the sovereign God.

However we may dissent from the teaching of Calvin it is easy to see what it did for man. Luther gathered about him a powerful group of the German nobility to accomplish his break with Rome. But Calvin by his very theology induced

a disregard for princelings as well as prelates. The doctrine of election struck off every shackle which man had put upon his fellows. No man had a better claim upon the grace of God than any other. The destiny of all men rested in the sovereign will of the Almighty. "In the presence of the awful responsibilities of life," says John Fiske, "all distinctions of rank and fortune vanished; prince and pauper were alike the helpless creatures of Jehovah and the suppliants of His grace." Thus by crushing the individual under the sovereign decrees of God, the individual was freed from all lesser bondage.

It is difficult for us to imagine the class distinctions of that age, or to enter into the feelings of the lower classes. The poor and the weak accepted their position and actually thought that they were essentially inferior to the rich and the influential. The doctrine of predestination changed all this. A man need only be numbered among the elect and the loud pretensions of potentates sounded in his ears empty and hollow. The soldiers of Cromwell under the impact of this mighty doctrine snorted at the assumption of superiority on the part of the nobles, and held in contempt the great ones of this earth who obviously had been elected of God for destruction.

The aristocrat is naturally an Arminian, for he does not fancy that his privileges are an accident or by the decree of God, but that they grow out of some intrinsically superior worth in himself. The

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Calvinist's sense of the exaltation of God dwarfs all earthly aristocracies and levels all human inequalities. Bancroft in his history of the United States remarks that "the political character of Calvinism which with one consent and with instinctive judgment, the monarchs of that day feared as republicanism, is expressed in a single word—predestination. Did a proud aristocracy trace its lineage through generations of a highborn ancestry, the republican reformers, with a loftier pride invaded the invisible world and from the book of life brought down the record of the noblest enfranchisement, decreed from eternity by the King of kings." When a man thus exalts the supreme and sole authority of God it dulls the luster of earthly grandeur and gives him a resolute, almost contemptuous, disregard of popes and kings and gentry. And when he feels that he is God's elect, chosen of God to do a special work and relying upon God's eternal decrees, let the man of title and birth stand out of his way. The result is William the Silent or Cromwell, the Puritans or the Huguenots, the Covenanters or the Ironsides.

Let me quote two more authorities. The historian Motley says, "To the Calvinists more than to any other class of men the political liberties of Holland and England and America are due." Greene in his History of England wrote, "As a vast and consecrated democracy it stood in contrast with the whole social and political framework of

the European nations. Grave as we may count the faults of Calvinism, alien as its temper may be in many ways from the temper of the modern world, it is in Calvinism that the modern world strikes its roots, for it was Calvinism that first revealed the worth and dignity of man. Called of God and heir of heaven, the trader at his counter and the digger of the field suddenly rose into equality with the noble and the king."

Calvin was the spiritual father of Coligny, of William the Silent and of Cromwell. The French Huguenots were a barrier to royal absolutism. Under William of Orange the Calvinists of Holland solemnly deposed Philip II in the name of self government and the States General, declaring that the sovereign is made for the people, not the people for the sovereign. In Scotland it was John Knox, a scholar from Geneva, who broke the rule of Queen Mary. In the 16th century, Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican Europe were still under absolutism with these small centers of political liberty, Switzerland, Holland and Scotland. These little centers taught the rest of the world. From Scotland came the Puritans and Cromwell's Roundheads who set up a republic in England. Calvinists of Holland and England brought self-government to America and founded the United States. It was in England that Voltaire learned religious tolerance, while Rousseau the "Citizen of Geneva," received so strong an imprint of Calvinism that he carried to France

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his "Social Contract." These sowed the seed which produced the French Revolution which was thus an indirect product of Calvinism.

In the conflict between rulers and ruled it is moral fiber which in the long run wins. A profligate nobility must certainly give way before a virtuous peasantry. It is frequently charged that the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, culminating in the perseverance of saints, must necessarily result in a too easy conscience and a dangerous laxity of morals. The natural inference from the fatalistic tendency of Calvinism is that it is liable to dull the edge of moral incentive. Here is another instance where experience disproves logic, only here the Calvinist has the experience and the Arminian the logic. The Calvinist need only point to history. His moral earnestness has never been surpassed, though Dr. Kuyper himself admits it is in contradiction to his confession. The Calvinist has never led a careless or ungodly life. Calvinism developed a harsh type of morality, but it was a moral type. Purity and chastity and unflinching rectitude were its fruits. It made stern fathers and unimpassioned husbands. But the "home as we conceive it was the creation of the Puritan," says Greene, and in all the history of the Puritans there is not an example of divorce. Moreover, Calvinists were as courageous as chaste. "A coward and a Puritan never went together." Those who feared no one but God lacked the ordinary sense of fear. So it was the uncompromising theology of Calvin

which developed moral fiber for the struggle against religion and political privilege, and thus more than any other force helped save the Reformation to the world, and gave it not only a democratic church but a democratic state.

To account for all the facts it must be said that Calvinism is in part a product as well as a cause. Calvinism makes men like Calvin, but it takes a man like John Calvin to make such a system of theology or to accept it. This, in parenthesis, is exactly the plea of the determinist—a man's choices are decided by pre-existent causes. Men of this type, of resolute moral purpose and conscious of their own rectitude, in contrast with the loose lives of those superior in rank, would naturally be drawn to a Calvinistic theology. But, given the right conditions, Calvinism was also a producer, and created the type of men needed to meet those conditions.

The old Calvinism has played its part. It is a force which has always been a stay in dark times. Back of Calvin is Augustine and Paul and the Jewish nation in whose theology Paul was deeply schooled. When God would use Israel to teach the world religion He inspired them with the belief that they were a chosen people, an elect race. The key to Jewish history is their faith that God had placed them in their promised country and that in them all the families of the earth should be blessed. This indomitable faith kept them separate from the nations about them until the fullness of time.

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Such magnificent egoism which relates the human to the divine in some personal and unalterable fashion, and makes one feel that his every act and emotion rests upon eternal decrees, carries him through any opposition. It was so in every crisis of religion, so in Reformation times, so when the Calvinist sought an asylum in the American wilderness.

The drift to-day is away from Calvinism. But should the time ever return when our morals get lax and the home loses its sanctity, or the aristocracy of wealth arrays itself against the aristocracy of character and culture and threatens our democratic institutions, then the old faith of Calvin and Augustine and Paul and of Israel in affliction will come back once more. Calvinism in its pure form is more Jewish than Christian; it is what the law is to the gospel, what the decalogue is to the beatitudes. But Calvinism is suited to times of storm and stress; it is the faith of reformers and pioneers and fighting Protestants. There are days when the Decalogue is more needed than the parable of the Good Samaritan, and when the pressed soul goes to the Westminster Confession for his theology more readily than to the Sermon on the Mount.

But may they never come again!

VII

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA TO RELIG- IOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS, D.D.

It is my privilege to represent in this symposium the Reformed Dutch Church in America, of which I was a member for twenty years or more, and in which I served as pastor in New York; and also the Congregational body of churches, in which I hold fellowship to-day.

In my church at Schenectady, in the old cemetery, are the descendants of Doctor Fuller, the physician of the *Pilgrim* and the *Mayflower*, and the mass of the people were descendants of the settlers, the free farmers, who, in 1662, left the semi-feudal system of Van Rensselaer at Albany and bought the land of the Indians and formed what was one of the very first free towns in old Dutch New York. It gives me great pleasure to tell what the Dutch have done — I have no Dutch blood whatever myself; I am a descendant from English ancestors — in New York and the United States for freedom. Their work has been very great, and I count them among the leaders of all

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the Christian denominations of America, for the simple reason that they had Republican ideas from the first. They came from Holland,—where the Hebrews first found a generous welcome and a home, so that Amsterdam is one of the great Hebrew capitals of the world. It was there that the Congregationalists, who were considered anarchists in England, also first found a home, because all the first Congregational churches in England were promptly thrown into prisons and the members hanged or harried, so that they had to leave England and go to Middleburg in Holland, where the first Congregational Church that was not arrested or dispersed into prison was founded. If I live until next summer I expect to go to Holland and put up a bronze tablet, in the name of the Congregational Sunday Schools of America, to the honor of Robert Browne, who organized the first Congregational Church that did not get into prison, in the land where William Bradford, Governor of the Pilgrims, said, “religion was free for all men.”

When the Dutch first came over here, after Henry Hudson's discovery of the Hudson River, they were all squatters, single men; there was not a Dutch woman or child on this continent until after 1623. Then, in the beautifully built new ship *New Netherland*, there came a band of twenty-five Walloon families, and the first women and children from the Netherlands came in that ship in 1623. Some were left on Manhattan Island, eight

of them at the Wallabout — that means the Walloon's bocht, or bend, at Brooklyn — some where Albany is now, and others on the shores of the Delaware River. They were French-speaking people, Walloons, from the southern Netherlands, south of Brussels, where people still live to-day who speak the Walloon language, or what is now modern French. These good Dutchmen came to this wild country, with nothing but forests and wild animals about them, bringing their wives and children. They came in the spirit of the Dutch Republic, where conscience was free, and in which Catholic, Congregationalist — considered anarchists at first in England — and people of every name and kind of religion, could have absolute freedom inside their own homes. Old Peter Stuyvesant, who was the military ruler, made it rough for the Hebrews, when the Spaniard drove them out of the West Indies, but he was rebuked instantly by the company which had the monopoly of the New Netherland at that time, for doing what was opposed to the spirit of the free Republic of the Netherlands. Then in 1662, one of the blackest acts of treachery ever known was committed, during the reign of Charles II. Two British frigates, loaded with cannon and troops, came into the Hudson River, in a time of profound peace, after Charles II. had hoodwinked the Dutch ambassador, and New Netherland was conquered and came under English rule. Col. Nichols, who had charge of the expedition, was a gentleman, and he safeguarded

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the rights of the Dutch people, whose was the first fully organized church in this country. In New York, inside of the fort on Manhattan Island, there was a regularly ordained and salaried minister, a board of church officers, elders and deacons, fifty people who brought their letters from the old country, and some who joined on confession of faith. The first church in what is now the United States of America was the Dutch Reformed Church of Manhattan, in 1629.

In the writing of our American history, New England got the first chance and nine-tenths of our history has been written within ten miles of the golden dome of Boston. That is the reason we have New England preponderating in our books — not in reality. I never heard of a scholar who wrote largely on American history that knew Dutch. John Fiske knew hardly enough to last him over night. Mr. Bancroft had to send a young gentleman over to Holland to make researches for him; I never heard of an American history the writer of which knew Dutch — I mean a great writer, like Bancroft or Fiske, or any of the writers of American history. Even in the recent great series of twenty-seven volumes, published by the Harper Brothers, there is a volume on the French, and on the Spanish, on this, that and the other; but I am not acquainted with real United States history if you leave out the Dutch. Eliminate the Dutch element, and I do not recognize our so-called national history.

The Dutch introduced religious freedom on this continent from the old Republic, where conscience was free. The United Netherlands was the first country in Europe where it was free. Long before Roger Williams was born, William the Silent, in writing the magistrate at Middleburg in 1575, said, "I have laid down the rule that as long as a man obeyed the laws of the country, no matter what his belief, he should be protected." That was written in Middleburg where the first Congregational Church — which in England would have been haled to prison — was being organized.

When under Charles Stuart, New Netherland became a royal English province, it had no charter, it had no safeguards of liberty, but the Reformed Dutch Church — ninety-five people out of a hundred in the colony were Netherlanders, or born of them — had the right to elect her own officers. They had always done so, and they determined to get a charter from King William III of England, and they got it ultimately. Yet those British governors left no stone unturned to get the English established church fixed in New York. They tried every means and device, but the Dutchmen always opposed them. Now, it was a great thing in Divine Providence, I think, that there existed this tough conservatism in a great body of Christian people who had Republican ideas. The Dutch seemed to the English then to be slow.

We talk about the "slow" Dutch. There isn't a country on this earth that is further advanced

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in civilization that Holland, and if you go there and study the people you will believe what I say. It was a good thing that we should have a great mass of the Dutch ideas and people here, that did not give up the Dutch language in the schools until about the year 1800. They held on to the Dutch ideas, the Republican ideas. If those people had been English, and spoken English, the English governors would also have attempted to establish the church in New Jersey and Delaware — they left no stone unturned to do it — and with their great social prestige they would have drawn the young people into the established church, which was not wanted. That is one of the things our Dutch fathers wanted to leave behind — the interference of the magistrate with conscience. So the Dutchmen fought the English government — or rather the promoters of Church and State — tooth and nail. One of the most interesting books is at Albany — if not burned in the fire at the Capitol — a collection of “bills which did not become laws,” but which showed what the spirit of the legislature was — a spirit of liberty, the spirit of a free conscience in a free state. The New York Dutchmen, reinforced by other “Dissenters,” kept up the warfare of freedom for a hundred and fourteen years, until, in 1788, they got the New York Constitution, the most liberal of all the state constitutions at that time, which granted to Catholics, Hebrews, and everybody, absolute religious liberty. It was in New York, not

Massachusetts, or anywhere else, that the battle for religious freedom for the whole United States was mainly won.

From 1664, when the Dutch obtained the right to elect their own officers and to resist the attempts of the English governors to establish the Church of England here, never more than four out of ten counties ever had a state church. There were never more than four out of the ten counties in which the Church of England was established by law. The reason why it did not get established was because of the efforts of the people in the Dutch Reformed Church—which has to-day three churches on Fifth Avenue and fourteen chapels in the city of New York, working among the poor as well as the rich. They obtained a charter from King William the Third, in 1690, which enabled them on the basis of law to resist the attempts of the English governors to establish a state church.

Why is it that New York led all state constitutions in the freedom of religion granted to all denominations, put it down in the fundamental law of the land, and safeguarded it in statute law? Why? Because, when King Charles II. took this province it became a royal province, and having no charter it was regarded as conquered territory. Either it had been conquered from the Dutch, and therefore was conquered territory; or else, by some claim, more or less valid, it had been re-conquered from a foreign country. In any case it was a royal province. What does that mean?

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Having no charter, like the New England colonies, it was necessary for the Dutch, for the Scotch, for the Irish, for the Catholics, for the Hebrews, for everyone who loved liberty, to unite together. If you will study the constitutional history of New York, you will find it was one struggle after another, argued on the basis of law, which is older than kings, older than republics, and older than anything that gains authority by mere name or title. On the basis of immutable law, the champions of right argued for freedom of speech, for freedom of church government, for freedom of conscience, until at last, in 1778, everything was ripe for permanence. The battle of a hundred and fourteen years had been fought and won. If you will read the New York constitution you will find there is absolute freedom of religion given to every man.

That is the contribution of the Reformed Dutch Church of America. There is a big difference between a German and a Dutchman. A German is an aristocrat by nature. You cannot use the German "Von" in Germany, unless you are entitled to it, without being arrested. Now, the Dutch were democratic to the last degree, and the spirit of the Reformed Dutch Church is democratic. The Germans, fleeing from the persecutions of Louis XIV. and the archbishops and the Roman Catholic Church, at a time when the Church and the State were one, coming to this country, poor and impoverished, as "redemptioners," hav-

ing lost their homes and property, were, first of all, helped and clothed and fed by the Classis of Amsterdam, in the Republic of the United Netherlands. Most of these who landed in this country went into the Mohawk Valley. They were sent thither in large numbers by the British government to raise naval stores or make — what in Germany and France was supposed could be made all the year around — maple sugar. They imagined the tree, out of which you could get sugar, yielded its sap all the year around. When they came down into Pennsylvania, or sailed in more ships from Rotterdam, they were helped by the Dutch. In later years, after 1800, they separated into two distinct bodies, and the German Reformed Church calls itself the Reformed Church in the United States, while the Dutch hold to the title of Reformed Church in America.

Although a Congregationalist by brotherhood, though I have the highest regard for every lover of holiness and humanity, I hold that in the United States the Dutch contribution to political and religious liberty is greater than that of any other single body of men allied in a church organization. I am a Congregationalist by connection and conviction, but I remember I begged the money and put up in the English Church at Amsterdam a tablet bearing witness to the fact to which Governor Bradford testifies in his book of Genesis of American history — “Bradford’s History of the Plymouth Plantation,” which is kept

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in Boston in a fireproof safe at night and under closed glass by day — that after being hanged and harried and imprisoned, these “Pilgrim Fathers” who were the poorest and plainest kinds of people — notwithstanding that unsocial snobbishness which ruins history, which would make out that the Pilgrims were the mightiest of men — after much travail of soul and consultation agreed to go into the Low Counties and to Amsterdam, “where they heard religion was free for all men.” They heard aright. These Separatists first tried to escape from Boston, in England. They were betrayed and put in prison and men, women and children scattered. Then they again attempted flight in the spring, and went over toward the great outlet looking toward Holland northeast of them. There, as you know, while they were on the beach, the men started first in the boats, according to the orders of the Dutch captain of the ship. When they got on board they saw three or four hundred men coming down the hill with bills and swords and axes to capture them. Anchor was hoisted, the ship sailed, and the women and children were left alone on the home-strand. The ship got into a storm and carried the exiles all the way to Norway, but finally, in one way or another the whole party reached Amsterdam. The records of the Reformed churches show that these refugees had to be clothed and taken care of and fed.

These outcasts from England were poor waifs

and foundlings in the world. Yet when they got to Amsterdam they had perfect freedom. In the seven congregations of exiles there was such perfect freedom that it intoxicated them. In those little churches there was much quarreling. One man, who, as Bradford says, had a "crackt brane," found fault with the minister's wife because she wore a very beautiful dress, cut low in the neck, and she wore sleeves, and cork-soled shoes such as ladies of her class wore, and this "crackt braned" brother found fault with her, hurling the scripture at her, from Ezekiel and Jeremiah. They had it hot and heavy for months. Finally the "crackt braned" fellow and his father were both excommunicated.

When their leader, John Robinson, found this great idea of soul freedom was likely to be lost in a petty squabble about how a woman should dress, he left the quarreling people at Amsterdam and went down to Leyden. You can see the paper in the archives to-day, where they made application. They say they will take care of themselves and do their own work. The burgomaster replies, "such people are welcome." If there is one city in Europe that has the right to be called the metropolitan city, "the mother of the United States in Europe," it is Leyden. From this place the Dutch came in large numbers to New Netherland. To Leyden had come hundreds of the Walloons, the French-speaking Protestants, driven out of the Netherlands in 1567 by the Spaniards. With a hundred thousand others they made Holland great.

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Many of the regiments under William the Silent consisted wholly of Walloons, speaking the French language. The Walloon men brought their women and children and made their homes in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. The Pilgrim Fathers, who were there eleven years, and many of the leading Huguenots who came to America eighty years later, made Leyden their base of recuperation and supplies, before crossing the Atlantic; so that Leyden has nourished and sent forth four great strains of the American people.

The Congregationalists had to fly from England and go over to Holland, but they left Amsterdam in order not to lose a great jewel in the chaff of a minor question. They came down to Leyden. Plain people as to the rank and file they were led by four or five great, magnificent men. The young and strong embarked for America. The old people stayed in Leyden and died there, and were all dead by 1655, and after that you find none of their records or names in the archives. The Pilgrim company in the *Mayflower* was largely made up of men born in England, but whose children were nearly all born in Holland, most of them using Dutch and going to the Dutch schools. I have been through the archives of Holland again and again. You can find public schools, sustained by taxation where boys and girls were educated alike, as far back as the twelfth century. The girls did not get into the public schools in Massachusetts

until after the Revolution. In Manhattan they were from the first educated together.

The Congregationalists of England came over to Holland. Why did they leave England? Why? Because they had in the Dutch Republic a free printing press. Printing was free in the Netherlands long before it was free in England. Twenty-four editions of the New Testament and twelve editions of the Bible were printed in the low countries before one edition of the Holy Scriptures was printed in England.

In 1621, Holland, poor little Holland, had to reopen the eighty-year fight with Spain. The Dutch wanted every cartridge and man; the boys of the Pilgrims were enlisting in the Dutch army and navy — from which we got the red and white stripes in the American flag, without any doubt, in my estimation, because Holland had a flag of seven stripes, red and white, representing the Republic; the girls were marrying Dutchmen. They must emigrate or be swallowed up by the Dutch. There were seven nationalities represented in the Pilgrim company. There was Miles Standish, a Roman Catholic — for the evidence shows this. He never joined the Pilgrim church and he was a very liberal man in his views. There were Irishmen, Scotchmen, Englishmen, Welsh, French, Walloon and Dutch people in the Pilgrim party, either as wives, husbands, fathers, mothers, or children. These great souls could stand Roger Williams, the radical — the man that was steeped and saturated

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in Dutch ideas, Republican ideas and notions of toleration and freedom of conscience. They could stand Miles Standish, the Roman Catholic, and Roger Williams, the radical. They had different phases of belief among themselves, but they all sat down to the communion table together, they were brothers. There is a vast difference between the Puritans and the Pilgrims although many after-dinner speakers do not seem to know it. The Pilgrims separated Church and State. When the Puritans — high-souled men with all their narrowness — got on virgin soil, they came under the influence of the Pilgrims, and in time they adopted the Congregational form of government. It took them a long time to give up the idea that the magistrate should regulate the conscience of men.

To-day — to close these remarks — I think we have very largely shed a good deal of the Puritan inheritance, so far as it allied Church and State; I hope we will never shed their moral ideas — for they were Hebrews under another name — they honored the Old Testament far more than the New; but the Pilgrims, believing in the separation of Church and State, believing in freedom of conscience, purified and sweetened by their afflictions, sorrows, and exile in a foreign land, dictated in a large sense the future of New England. Their work and that of the Dutch have constituted the chief constructive power in making the United States what it is, for all we know of Federal govern-

ment came from Holland, not England; the Dutch deserve the credit for that cosmopolitan spirit which allowed Hebrew and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, to live together in peace and joy. Although I have in me no Dutch blood, and none of the Pilgrim blood, so far as I can find by tradition or documents, I am glad as a student who believes that the history of the United States can never be written by anyone who does not know Dutch thoroughly — to bear this testimony.

VIII

THE UNITARIAN CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

L. WALTER MASON, D.D.

The Unitarian Church has contributed to Religious and Civil Liberty just in so far as it has helped to free man's spirit. Doctrines change, laws on the statute books change, for better, for worse, according as the mind of man is progressive or reactionary. Liberty comes not through some outward event — the kingdom of God comes not by observation because it must come in and through the inner personality of man.

I would not be understood as crediting all people who have borne the Unitarian name with being the promoters of freedom. Nor do I claim that all, even of its accredited spokesmen, have been fully conscious of the principle which gave the Unitarian Church its being. Had they been, there never would have been occasion for the organization of Free Religious Societies, and "Western issues" might not have arisen to rend its councils.

Many worthy and honest souls have concerned themselves only with their parochial cares, and

the things most commonly believed, so interested in the transient and the incidental, as to fail to sense the current in the mighty stream of the religious life.

Every reformation, whether in music, literature, politics, or religion manifests itself first in a protest,—a protest against arbitrary restrictions imposed on the expression of life. A reformation in any field of human interest seems to be prompted by the same motive, the desire for a more satisfying expression of life. And man is such a unit that that which relates to one part of his nature affects him in all.

Unitarianism began in such a protest, and can never be understood so long as it is thought of as merely a doctrinal variation from the orthodox church of one hundred years ago. Some even of our own denominational historians, in tracing the subtle doctrinal thread which seems to run back to Italy, Holland, and England, fail to perceive the movement in its larger relationships. Channing declared that Unitarianism "began as a protest against the rejection of reason." (We need to remember that Channing used the word "reason" in the comprehensive sense which includes the entire conscious nature of man.)

Unitarianism was a protest against an authoritative supernaturalism — a supernaturalism which denied to man the right to the exercise of the legitimate functions of the mind. In other words, it was a new expression of humanism. Not the

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philosophical humanism of Comte, nor that modern form of humanism known as pragmatism, or the humanism in the academic sense which is nourished on a special diet in our colleges. But in the broad sense in which it is applied to that revolt against mediæval ecclesiasticism which manifested itself at the beginning of the modern age; a movement in which we have always recognized our indebtedness to Greek thought.

The nature of the Unitarian movement was obscured from the first by being given a doctrinal name, which naturally implied a doctrinal interest. And in this country where we have been content to cover all manner of wide divergencies of belief by the two terms, orthodox and heterodox, our labels have given but slight indication of the content of any movement.

We can understand the animating spirit of the liberal church in America better when we note the way in which the German people think of and designate these divergent forms of religious experience in their national life. There, where the same wide divergencies and sharp antagonisms exist, and exist all in one State Church, they are recognized as having their rise far back in German history in two distinct impulses, viz., the Reformation, always in our mind associated with Luther, and in German humanism equally associated with the names of Kant and Goethe. In the Reformation the entire energy is focused on a signal object, the salvation of the soul. In hu-

manism, man is to find the meaning of life in the full play of all his faculties. In the Reformation God is thought of almost wholly as the transcendent power. In humanism God is the immanent power. The Reformation belittles man's power, humanism glorifies it. These opposing ideals in the State Church are designated in Germany to this day as the Reformation and humanism.

The motives producing the antithesis in America are essentially the same as those in Germany. With us the term "reformation" has a less definite meaning; several streams flowed into our reformation, some more acrid elements, more destructive to sensitive blossoms of nature than anything which went out from the pre-eminently human Luther. So, in thinking of religious history here, in place of the term reformation, we should more properly say supernaturalism as opposed to humanism.

But the humanism of America (to be more specific, the humanism of Channing), was not that of the Greeks who took life joyously, and played the game brilliantly and beautifully, nor the humanism of Germany which drew largely on their Greek forerunners, and added to it a wealth of philosophical thought all their own, but the humanism of a child of the Puritans, nourished on the moral seriousness of the Old Testament. It was a protest not so much in the interest of the intellectual and esthetic faculties, as for the sake

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of the moral and spiritual nature. It was a humanism deeply rooted in the spiritual life and, so far as the untrained Puritan imagination to forms of beauty would permit, it blossomed in poetry, as humanism always has. The American humanist centered his assault against the despotic repression of a supernatural absolutism. With startling audacity he declared: "I am surer that my rational nature is from God than that any book is the expression of His will" . . . "Never, never do violence to your rational nature. He who in any case admits doctrines which contradict reason, has broken down the great barrier between truth and falsehood. . . . Faith in its power lies at the foundation of all other faiths." * And again: "All minds are of one family, of one origin, one nature, kindled from one divine flame." So with spiritual passion he battered down the bars which had so long confined the mind of America, and straightway we see the signs of mental and spiritual freedom, the trying of spiritual wings unaccustomed to flight. It is a Puritan freedom, however, which speaks in the "Psalm of Life," the "Chambered Nautilus," the "Problem," "Thanatopsis," and the "Hymns of Whittier."

Did the limits of this paper permit it would be profitable to trace the outflowing of this American humanism in the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

* Channing.

Another result of this spiritual humanism not so evident as the outflowing of New England poetry, but just as immediate and more far-reaching, was social. It was the vital human interest which came home with the most force to Channing. His first utterance to attract general attention was an anti-war sermon. The Peace Society of Massachusetts was organized in his study: But his opposition to war and to slavery was not prompted by economic considerations, but because of the irreverence and the indignities to which it subjected men. He said, "Let the *worth* of the human being be felt . . . and the main pillar of war will fall." It was as a moral evil war must be abolished. His argument against flogging in the navy was simply the indignant exclamation, "What, strike a man!"

Channing's idealism has its counterpart in the profound social consciousness and practical humanitarianism of Theodore Parker.

Channing, Parker and Emerson, in common with all the great humanists, who have drawn their inspiration from their perception of the spiritual nature of man, their reverence for the inner personality of man, laid the deep foundation of democracy, and yet democracy,—that democracy which would find the whole solution in economics, misunderstands the humanists. For the humanists, finding their interests in man because of the quality of his being, have a keen appreciation of distinctions and differences which give them

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the flavor of aristocracy ; something which always arouses the antagonism of the democracy which belittles quality and magnifies quantity, which denies distinctions and glorifies sameness, the democracy which cannot tell what the word of God is until the votes are counted.

The hope of the world is in democracy, but it must be a democracy resting on reverence for man's inner personality. And not simply on the demand that man shall be well-fed and well-clothed and housed, and well-educated, and have time in which to enjoy himself. Democracy resting on a pure naturalism is only a society for the prevention of cruelty of rational animals. That leads only into a blind alley,—at best a barren self-culture,—a game not worth the candle. But with a sense of the value and sanctity of each person, as a child of God, possessing in himself somewhat the nature and quality of God, and therefore reflecting His life and law, and contributing at least in a small measure to the understanding of the divine nature and law, it becomes necessary not only in religion but in social and political life, that we should have the fullest measure of realization which even the humblest citizen can receive and reflect.

Jesus met the appeal for an authoritative statement with the question, "Judge ye not of yourselves what is right?" As sons of God men should not think like abject slaves. It was in this appeal which Jesus made to the spiritual na-

ture of man that the apostle saw the liberating power, and protesting against the authority of all outward rite and law, urged his followers to stand fast in the freedom wherewith Christ hath made them free.

It was to the inner life of man himself that Jesus made his appeal, and that other prophetic minds have made a kindred appeal detracts nothing from its force. Plato proclaimed that "Man is governed by his idea of good"; Kant that "He guides himself by the conception of law"; and Goethe declares that, "Man alone can perform the impossible. He distinguishes, chooses, and judges. He can impart to the moment duration." "And in man's nature," says Channing, "are marks of a divine origin, and the pledges of a celestial inheritance." Emerson tells us: "Let man then learn the revelation of all nature and all thought to his heart; this, namely, that the highest dwells in him, that the sources of nature are in his own mind, if the sentiment of duty is there."

The only possible enduring foundation of either religious or civil liberty is the belief in the worth and the trustworthiness of our common human nature. Tyranny, either political or ecclesiastical, rests on the conviction that man is too base to govern himself, and must be governed by the divine authority of King or Church. And progress in human betterment is equally dependent on the conviction that man is a progressive and an

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ascending being. This assertion will be verified by observation and experience in social service work. The people who oppose the advances of welfare work for dependent and delinquent children, for the feeble-minded, the insane, and prisoners, are always those who lack faith in these unfortunate people and who think only of what may be done to and for them, lacking the faith in what they may do for themselves. This is so well known that social workers have come to expect co-operation from the devotees of the old theology only to the extent of providing alms or relief.

It was not, therefore, a mere coincidence that the assertion of the dignity and worth of human nature fired a generation of philanthropists and reformers. The ambition of the leaders of the Unitarian Church was not to create a new church, but a better nation, a new humanity. So, instead of sending out an army of apostles to build churches, there went out from the influence of Channing, Dorothea Dix to reform the prisons and build hospitals for the insane of America; Horace Mann, to establish the public school system of America; Dr. Samuel G. Howe, to set free the mind shut in by deafness and blindness.

There never has been any sectarian labels or limitations on either the reforms or the philanthropies of Unitarians. They have built many hospitals and asylums, but the desire to honor their church was never great enough to lead them

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to give a sectarian name to an institution intended for our common humanity.

Presidents Jefferson, John Adams and John Quincy Adams, Chief Justice Marshall, Charles Sumner, Frederick Douglass, Mary A. Livermore, and Julia Ward Howe are names of representative Unitarians whose great services to freedom, both civil and religious, were the outcome of this form of faith.

Thomas Starr King wore out his life, not in building churches on the Pacific coast, but in saving California to the Union. Our civil liberty has been fortified in no small measure by the civil service reform, a contribution to American political life made chiefly by our small fellowship. The agitation for the reform was started by Representative Jencks of Rhode Island. It was taken up by James Freeman Clarke, Henry W. Bellows, Dorman B. Eaton, and George William Curtis; and in the Senate, its first and most powerful advocates were Senators Hoar and Burnside. All these men were Unitarians.

If "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," this does not mean that we shall burden ourselves with military taxation,—that has often been the way to lose liberty,—it means that we shall ceaselessly guard and defend "soul liberty," the freedom of thought and speech, the freedom of the inner personality of man. If man's mind is free, he may be depended upon to break down all confining walls, whether ecclesiastical or political.

IX

THE UNIVERSALIST CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

ISAAC M. ATWOOD, D.D.

Liberalism in religion is both an idea and a spirit. It sustains a relation to religion in general similar to that which democracy sustains to politics and government. Both spring from a common root. That root is the perception of the large prerogatives of human nature, and the resulting conviction that it must have scope. Everything hinges on the question, whether man is a fallen being or a risen being. If a risen being, he may be expected to rise further. Democracy says: Make room for him. He will be as big as the political frame provided for him.

Freedom in religion has the same connotations. Its conception of man as a spiritual child of God makes loud demands for his self development and self expression. He belongs to an order of being, not only of large discourse, looking before and after, but one "holding commerce with the skies," in Milton's phrase: whose power of attainment waits on his liberty of thought and action. As Dr. Montessori has found the secret of the rapid and

harmonious development of the child of careful and ample provision for its spontaneous activities interfered with as little as possible by the obtrusion of adult notions of what a child should do and be, so the liberal discovery in Religion is, that freedom of the spirit is the law of the life of the evolution of the spirit.

The Universalist note in the liberal symphony was struck at a very early period. We hear its first distinct cadences in Paul the apostle. By the Fourth Century it reckons the chief names in the Christian calendar as its oracles — Clement of Alexandria, Pantaenus, Gregory, Thaumaturgus, Pamphilus, Didymus, Dionysius, Gregory Nazianzen, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Origen.

This first development of Universalism is plainly a natural and logical outcome from the original Gospel. I think it is impossible for any fair and comprehensive mind to acquaint himself with the views of these Universalist fathers, and of the Alexandrian School generally, and compare them with the very different views introduced soon after, and that dominated Christian thought for 1500 years, including the long night of the Middle Ages, and not see how superior in point of reasonableness, sweetness and light the former were, and how different and freer and better would have been the civilization of the period, if it had been pervaded with the earlier religion. That theological and religious strain has a quality distinctly broader, saner, simpler than any other that ap-

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pears in the same era. It is like the difference between the philosophy of Plato and the physics of Aristotle, and those of the Schoolmen a thousand years later.

Modern Universalism, which has had its organic development mostly in America, was at first—in the persons of Murray and Winchester and Ballou and their confrères, a vision and a revelation. They saw a great light. It allured them, fascinated them, inspired,—one may say almost intoxicated them. The way in which their fervid message was received diverted it into a protest. It is an interesting speculation, now merely academic, what would have been the history of American Universalism, if the great and generous conception of the Divine Being and of His plans, of the meaning and outcome of Christianity, and of the intrinsic worth of a human soul, with which the first preachers of Universalism in America were possessed and inspired, had been given any measure of hospitality by the ministers and churches of that period. To me it is clear that an access of spiritual light and energy, greatly needed, would have been experienced by organized religion, and the sect, everywhere spoken against, would have come to its own proper estate, as a partner in the common life of the churches, and a liberal contributor to the common religious health and wealth and joy.

As it actually happened, they were compelled to be insurgents. Having been greeted as enemies

and destroyers, it seemed incumbent on them to make good their title. I do not stand to approve all the doctrines or attitudes of the earlier Universalists — nor for that matter of the later — but the closest acquaintance and study of them awakens on the whole admiration and sympathy.

They were largely from the yeomanry of the nation; men and women of brain and force and independence; in natural alliance with what has been styled “Jeffersonian simplicity”; untrammelled by fashion and custom in their thinking and habits; marked everywhere by their inclination to sympathize with the “under dog” in all public conflicts; hospitable, wholesome, hearty in their home life; and by social and civic gravitation on the side of freedom and the rights of man. It was inevitable that wherever they were planted, and they had a quite wide distribution in the Northern States, and a considerable following in the older Southern States, they should disseminate unconventional usages and liberal practices in politics and religion and social life.

The temptation is strong to particularize. But I deny myself, except for one sample instance. In the early part of the nineteenth century, laws on the statute books of Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire, and attempted to be put on the statutes of Maine, taxed every freeholder, of whatever religious or non-religious stripe, to support the “standing order”—the Congregationalists. The removal of this iniquity and disgrace

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from the laws of these commonwealths, was accomplished by Universalists, who took the initiative, pursued the matter unflinchingly, and saw it through the legislatures. This prevalent trend of the denomination, reinforced by the mighty and persistent protest against dreadful dogmas, which they have done as much, to say the least, as any one instrumentality of Divine Providence, to make odious and effete, gives Universalists an indefeasible claim to a place in the first rank of those who have borne witness, often at great cost, in behalf of the sacred principles of civic and spiritual freedom which are the birthright of all the sons and daughters of God.

X

THE CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS RADICALS TO RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTY

EDWIN D. MEAD, A.M.

The different sects and types of doctrine having been taken care of in previous papers, there seems to be a residuum, the body of the unclassified; and this has been turned over to me, perhaps as the most nondescript man at command for the service. I am willing indeed to assume the duty, for my admiration for the men to whom I ask your attention is profound. Turning to the religious radicals, the unclassified, none of us, however regular or irregular, can fail to pay to them our tribute. Think of the immense service for education, for civil liberty, that was rendered only yesterday in Spain by Ferrer; think of the immense influence for civil and religious liberty, for social inspiration all over the world, rendered in Italy by Mazzini; of the mighty influence in France of Victor Hugo, and a century further back of Rousseau, who more than almost anybody else in his period affected the educational and the political thought of Europe. His was the only portrait that we know to have

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hung above the desk of Immanuel Kant. Think of the influence in our time of Tolstoi in Russia; think of the influence of Lessing, and of Kant himself in Germany; think of the influence in these later times in England of Charles Dickens, of those noble women, George Eliot and Harriet Martineau, of Carlyle and Ruskin; of the contrast in England only the other day, when that sharp crisis was on, when it was the religious radicals, the unclassified, the nondescript, John Morley, Herbert Spencer, Frederick Harrison, who rose up amidst all the wickedness and injustice of the Boer War to remind England of her duty, when every bishop on the bench save one or two was silent or whitewashed the iniquity.

We may never forget these things; and in America we may never forget, whatever our grade of regularity or orthodoxy, the services of the great unclassified, the religious radical, the free-thinker. If we were to name three men of the last generation here in America who perhaps more than any others influenced our thought, we should largely agree in naming Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, and Abraham Lincoln, men who were put out of the synagogue, or went out, or like Abraham Lincoln never went in. It is unnecessary here to say anything about the religious influence of Theodore Parker and Ralph Waldo Emerson. We have very recently been celebrating the Parker centennial. I would rather in speaking of religious radicals and their influence upon religious and civil

liberty in America, call your attention to three of the founders of this great American commonwealth, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine. You could not name three men among those who formulated the principles which American democracy stood for then, and the Republic was destined to stand for in history, who stated those principles more powerfully than these three men, none of them belonging to churches, none of them men of religious "regularity," all of them men whom the orthodox and the regulars in their day were in the habit of saying had no religion at all. That character was given them so strongly and so persistently by the religious men who in that time set the tone, that they are hardly yet freed from it in the minds of many men.

This emancipation of reputations and of names is generally a slow process, although sometimes it is a fairly rapid process. It is something over forty years ago that I came to Boston as a boy from New Hampshire; and I remember well the feeling in New Hampshire among good orthodox people, and the feeling in Boston then among good orthodox people, about Theodore Parker. Why, his name was a red rag in pretty much all reputable religious society of any pretension to orthodoxy. Two or three years ago, some of us went out to Chicago to take part in the celebration there of the Theodore Parker centennial. Among the addresses which I was invited to give during that week was one on Parker before the students of the

theological department of Northwestern University, as many of you know, a Methodist institution; and I was most heartily welcomed by the head of the theological department, and most kindly listened to and warmly applauded by that large body of young men. That is one index of the movement that has gone on among us in forty years. But to this day America is full of men who think of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine as almost enemies of religion, or as men who had no religion to speak of. Perhaps one reason for it in the case of Jefferson is the reason referred to by Dr. Griffis in his paper that our history has been so largely written by New Englanders; and the people of New England back in Thomas Jefferson's time, especially the more influential members of society, the cultivated classes, were so largely Federalists, to whom the name of Jefferson was a red rag. Never was a man the victim of greater injustice than Thomas Jefferson suffered for two generations from those classes in New England.

As many of you know, the leaders of the Revolution were, many of them, men who thought essentially as Jefferson and Franklin. Washington was a member of the Church of England, but Washington himself had little "orthodoxy" to speak of, as my studies show me. Deism, the old-fashioned eighteenth-century Deism, was very prevalent among the leading founders of the American republic. We hear very little about the

"irreligion" of John Adams, he has never been held up to conspicuous gaze as a dangerous thinker, yet as matter of fact his religious opinions were essentially the same, so far as definition goes, as those of Jefferson, and he held his heresies in a more unpleasant and unattractive way. If you will read the correspondence in their later life between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, which was to no inconsiderable extent upon philosophical and religious subjects, I think you will be impressed by the greater attractiveness, warmer imagination, and more philosophical character of Jefferson's attitude toward religion, which altogether is very much the attitude of most radical and rational men to-day.

What was the religion of these three great religious radicals who have such prominence among the founders of the republic of the United States, the religion of Franklin and Jefferson and Thomas Paine? I revive for your recollection a scene in which the religion of Benjamin Franklin found one very dramatic expression. It was toward the close of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, of which he was a member, having come home a year or two before from his distinguished diplomatic career in France. The convention was nearly shipwrecked more than once through the extreme and almost irreconcilable differences of opinion among the delegates. It was when matters were at their worst that Benjamin Franklin, I think the oldest member of the convention, rose

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and proposed that from that day on the convention be opened every day by prayer. He said, substantially: "We have sat here deliberating during these weeks, and we have come almost to failure; we have roamed through the nations of antiquity to find some models that would guide us, we have looked through the modern nations of Europe, but we are all at sea, and apparently no nearer agreement than ever. I remember how, back in the early days of the Continental Congress, the body which declared independence in this very room, our deliberations were each day opened by prayer. We were guided through that terrible conflict, I believe, by Divine Providence. I think that this convention should go to the Father of Light for illumination, and open its deliberations every day by prayer." He continued to express his sense of the Divine Providence which had guided America in her former great struggle, he spoke of his long life and his varied political experience, and he said: "The firm conviction to which I have come is that God rules in the affairs of men; and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, an empire cannot rise without His aid." He appealed to the sacred Scriptures, expressing his veneration for the great Scriptures which had guided the fathers.

Some of you, students in political history, know the result of Franklin's action. His motion was lost. Franklin, in giving an account of it afterwards, said that he found only three or four to

support it. Hamilton opposed it. Hamilton was actuated apparently a good deal by the feeling of the woman aboard ship in a terrible storm. She went to the captain and asked what the chances were, and the captain frankly told her they were desperate, that "the best we can do now is to trust in Providence." "Oh," she cried, "has it come to that?" That was about the feeling of Alexander Hamilton. He said: "If we should begin to pray now, and it should get out that we were praying, when we hadn't done it before, the country would think we were desperate." Franklin thought it would be a good thing if the country did find out precisely that. Another member said: "We know very well that the reason we haven't had any prayers is that there isn't money in the treasury to pay for a clergyman." That was the kind of discussion by which Franklin's proposal was side-tracked. But the point is that the proposal was made, and it was backed by one of the most earnest speeches in the convention, and proposed and earnestly supported by Benjamin Franklin. And it illustrates Franklin's life.

Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, these names have become in so many "regular" circles synonymous with irreligion. I wish there were in the Senate of the United States to-day a lot of politicians, a lot of statesmen, as prominent in political affairs as were those men then, or whose words showed half the devotion to

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religious thought, to religious subjects, to religious aspirations, shown by the words of those men.

I had occasion at the Franklin centennial half a dozen years ago to look through all the pages of Franklin's works, pencil in hand, for two purposes: I wanted to mark every passage in his works which related to war and peace — and I assure you that an equal body of doctrine cannot be brought together from the works of any of his contemporaries — and to mark the passages which had to do with Franklin's religion. Although I have always been a student of Franklin, the result of that critical examination was to me a revelation. From early life, all through his life, Franklin's interest in religious matters, in religious men, in religious thought, was profound. He had a brief sandy and skeptical period, but it did not much affect the deep things. He once went through the work of revising the liturgy of the Church of England, in order to fit it better to modern thought. He was always thinking of religious things. One of his eulogists has spoken of him as the most consummate Christian of his time. Whether that is true or not, the reasons by which this admirer, one of his prominent biographers, supports his judgment are very intelligent reasons. He shows that there was no man in his time who had a broader spirit of fellowship, of toleration, of brotherhood with all kinds of men. We know of his relations with the Unitarians of his time, with some of the Roman Catholics of his

time. His breadth of fellowship was universal; and surely if there ever was a man who spent his time going about doing good, it was Benjamin Franklin. I can think in the annals of time of no other man who was more industrious in doing good, which is a pretty good test of religion — Jesus Christ's test; I can think of no man who devoted his life more assiduously and systematically to doing good than Benjamin Franklin. I remember no utterance of his which has impressed me more than this: "It is incredible, the quantity of good that may be done in a country by a single man who will make a business of it, and not suffer himself to be diverted from that purpose by different vocations, studies or amusements." That seems to me Benjamin Franklin speaking for himself; and if you catalogue the services of that man for humanity, it is a stupendous record of good works.

As for Thomas Jefferson,— he is the only prominent statesman of that time whom I can think of who, for one thing, was so devoted to the very thoughts and words of Jesus, that he prepared a special collection of them. This collection has been published by the United States government. In his tribute to Jesus he lays emphasis on the sufficiency of the doctrines of Jesus for personal and social religious life. I do not know a tribute more emphatic in the literature of his time. A radical— yes. He welcomed the preaching of Channing, he read his sermons and addresses as they began to appear in the early part of that nine-

teenth century. He hoped there was not a thoughtful young man living in America who would not become a Unitarian before he died; that was his declaration in so many words. His interest in radical thought was profound; but his interest in religious work, in the organization of mankind so as to lay the emphasis upon the humanities — this was the guiding thing in Thomas Jefferson's life.

How about Thomas Paine? He has been indeed a troublesome figure. There is no man in our religious or political history who has been the victim of such misrepresentation, of such persistent obloquy, as Thomas Paine. I think the general attitude of the American people towards Thomas Paine was fairly well expressed by Theodore Roosevelt when he wrote in his life of Gouverneur Morris, at the point when Morris was over in Paris as our minister and Paine was locked up in prison for his politics: "There was a filthy, little atheist named Thomas Paine, who was amusing himself in prison by writing a book against religion." The real truth reminds one of the statement of somebody about the "Holy Roman Empire," that it was neither holy, Roman, nor empire. Now Thomas Paine was neither filthy, little, nor atheist. The testimony is that he was a man who had a special care for dress and good appearance, though certainly there were hard exigencies in his life when slight regard for these was possible; he was a man of good stature; and his relig-

ious works were written in the interest of theism, precisely to overcome atheistic ideas. But it is hard to eradicate from the popular mind, poisoned by prejudice and falsehood, the myth that has been made up and supported through the generations, that Thomas Paine was a drunkard and a man of low moral character. I say a persistent myth,—for myth it is, as any serious student may satisfy himself. The story of his drunkenness has largely been made up from his grocer's account, which happened to be preserved, and showed that he bought a good deal of rum. Well, Thomas Paine did buy a good deal of rum, measured by reputable American usage in 1913. I was interested two or three year's ago in getting hold in my native New Hampshire town of the account books of the grocer in the early part of the last century, the grocer who furnished my exceedingly respectable and reputable grandfather with his groceries, and was amused to see the amount of rum the old man bought. Yet he was a sober man, an eminently good citizen, a faithful supporter of the church. The accounts of all the other good men, the deacons and the rest, the parson for aught I remember, were in the same book, and they were all buying rum; there was nothing else more frequently entered. The town records tell of the appropriations for rum when the parson was installed. If you will read Sylvester Judd's "Margaret," that remarkable picture of New England life in the period between the Revolution and the end of the

century, you will be amazed to find the extent to which society seems to float in rum. It was a rummy age; Thomas Jefferson seems to have been about the only man who drank little, for he couldn't stand drinking. I suppose that around New Rochelle, New York, where Thomas Paine lived, and where this myth about his drunkenness has its geography, there were deacons by the dozen who were drinking regularly more rum than Thomas Paine ever drank, without in the slightest degree affecting their religious reputation. I speak of these things, which I have investigated, because I feel so strongly the wrong which has been done to this man, certainly not as an apologist for rum nor for eighteenth century social usages.

Then again as to Thomas Paine's religion. The two chief enemies of religion, he once said, are fanaticism and infidelity; and he fought one just as hardly all his life as he fought the other. "My friend," he wrote to old Sam Adams in Massachusetts, a good orthodox Puritan — the last of the Puritans they used to call him — who had remonstrated with him over "The Age of Reason" — "My friend, do you call believing in God infidelity?" When Jefferson's envoy found him so miserably poor in Paris and arranged to bring him home on a government ship, as an expression of Jefferson's sense of the obligation of the United States to him, this envoy found that he was willing to talk but little about his political achievements,

which counted so much in the eyes of the people, but that his fervor was all about religion; he emphasized the sublime effect of creation upon the mind of man in assuring him of the existence and the power of God. The thing that he protested against was authority, authority that held men down in religion and in politics; he stood against authority and for humanity. "The evidences of religion," he said, "are the power of God displayed in creation, and that repugnance we feel in ourselves to bad actions and the disposition to do good ones."

As to his rationalism, a good deal of it is certainly crude enough from the standpoint of today's better scholarship, but it does not seem to me half so crude as the ideas of the Bible and miracle which were held by the orthodox people of his time who were decrying him, and a good deal of it comes vastly closer to the views of the Bible, to the "higher criticism," entertained today by men representing the so-called conservative or orthodox churches, who gladly join in a symposium like this. A good deal of it, I say, is crude; but it was a crude age — and Thomas Paine faced the theology of the eighteenth century and not that of the twentieth. Lessing was about the only rationalist of that time with whom we feel real kinship; but remembering the extraordinary lack of science and criticism in the churches themselves, few rational men can read the most savage of Paine's pages without persuasion of his good pur-

pose and his truthfulness with himself. I believe that in that time there were perhaps no three works that rendered greater immediate service to mankind than Paine's "Common Sense," his "Rights of Man" and, with reservations, his "Age of Reason," — which last many men would do well to read before they talk about it.

What about his public services, his public services here in the United States? He stood preëminently for the principles which have come to obtain and to rule in this country. His "Common Sense" had in many ways a greater influence than any other pamphlet ever issued in this country. In that day of small things, one hundred and twenty thousand were almost immediately printed and circulated. It was his pamphlets on the Crisis, that first one especially with its opening words about the time that tried men's souls, that inspired the men who presently won the victory at Trenton. It was his "Common Sense" that helped convert Washington himself to the idea of independence, at a time when men were hardly venturing to speak of independence. After he had helped us win our independence he went over to Paris and worked in the French Revolution, worked always on the side of sanity, on the side of the things for which men like Washington and Jefferson and Franklin stood here, always against the things which developed the mischievous side of the French Revolution. He was as much hated by Robespierre and the extremists of the

Reign of Terror as he was hated by the privileged classes in France. Then he came back here for the rest of his life.

It was not simply for freedom in the one revolution and the other that Paine stood. He was the first American politician who framed a scheme for the emancipation of the slaves. He worked for emancipation with Franklin, and in 1775 the first American anti-slavery society was founded, of which Franklin became the president. Just as those great radicals, Emerson, Parker and Lincoln, were united in the last century in the great cause of anti-slavery, so Franklin and Jefferson and Thomas Paine were peculiarly united in their time in the service of the same cause. I know of no such demands for the rights of man in that time as those of Thomas Paine and Franklin and Jefferson. All stand preëminent back there as champions of the great principle of the substitution of law for war in the settlement of international disputes, which has become the commanding cause of our own time. Paine's championship of the rights of woman was as brave as Theodore Parker's later on. All along the line he fought for justice. "My country is the world," he said, "my religion is to do good." He proposed a Society of Theophilanthropists. The thought of God and the thought of man always went together with him. The thought of man as the child of God it was which made indignity and injustice to man so intolerable to him. If, as Jefferson himself wrote

after Paine's struggles and sufferings in the French Revolution, Paine steadily labored in our own Revolution "with as much effect as any man living," it was because there burned in him from first to last the flame of a lofty and resolute idealism. It was a noble word of Jefferson's, "Where liberty is there is my country"; but a yet nobler word was Thomas Paine's, "Wherever liberty is not, there is my country," emphasizing his fellow-citizenship with every down-trodden people who needed his helping hand.

It is superfluous here to pay tribute to the political services of Franklin. He stood as a center in the great democratic party among the founders of the republic; and he was the greatest diplomatic servant we ever had in Europe. His Albany plan of union in 1754 was an anticipation of our federal union, and in the deliberations of the Constitutional convention he stood for the most advanced positions. His services for the education and enlightenment of the American people were numberless and immeasurable.

As for Jefferson,—why, his name has become preëminently the one which is the actual symbol of everything democratic in our life, in our politics, everything which has hope and trust and faith in it. It was Abraham Lincoln who declared Jefferson the greatest political thinker in our history, and his principles the axioms of free society. Theodore Parker it was who used before Lincoln those great words about "government of the peo-

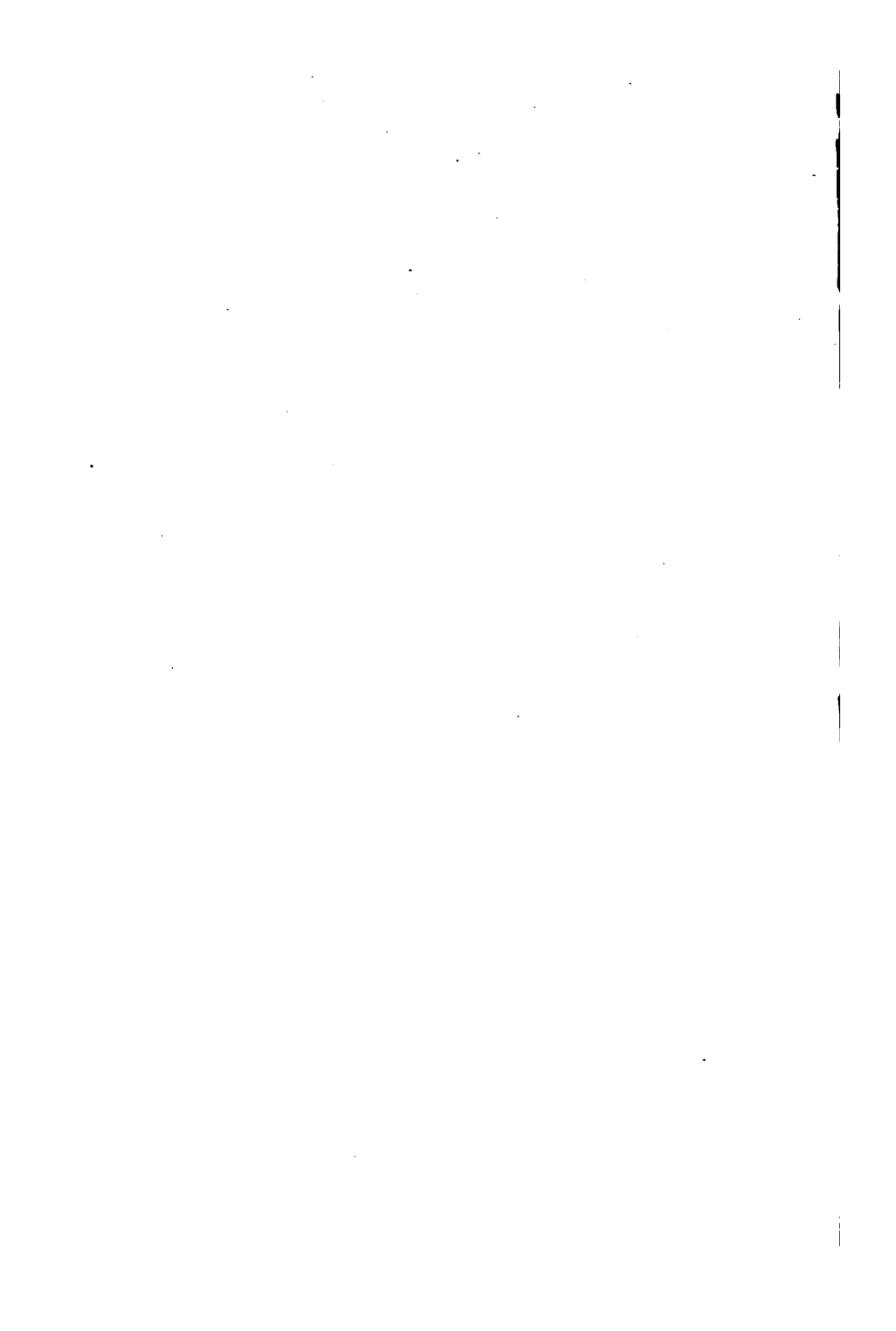
ple, by the people, and for the people," and his tribute to Jefferson we also remember; and it was Emerson, the religious radical, who defended the Declaration of Independence from the charge of being merely a mass of glittering generalities by exclaiming, "Blazing ubiquities rather!" Jefferson defended the principles of democracy of government of the people, by the people, and for the people; he stood for the principles of Paine's "Rights of Man," and for the principles which Franklin championed from his youth to his age; he stood for education in every form, stood for ideas, with a persistence, an originality and a resoluteness unsurpassed among Americans. A record of service for ideas alone he chose to have inscribed upon his monument when he died — this man who had been governor, ambassador, president, the bearer of every possible dignity and honor: "Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence and of the statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and father of the University of Virginia."

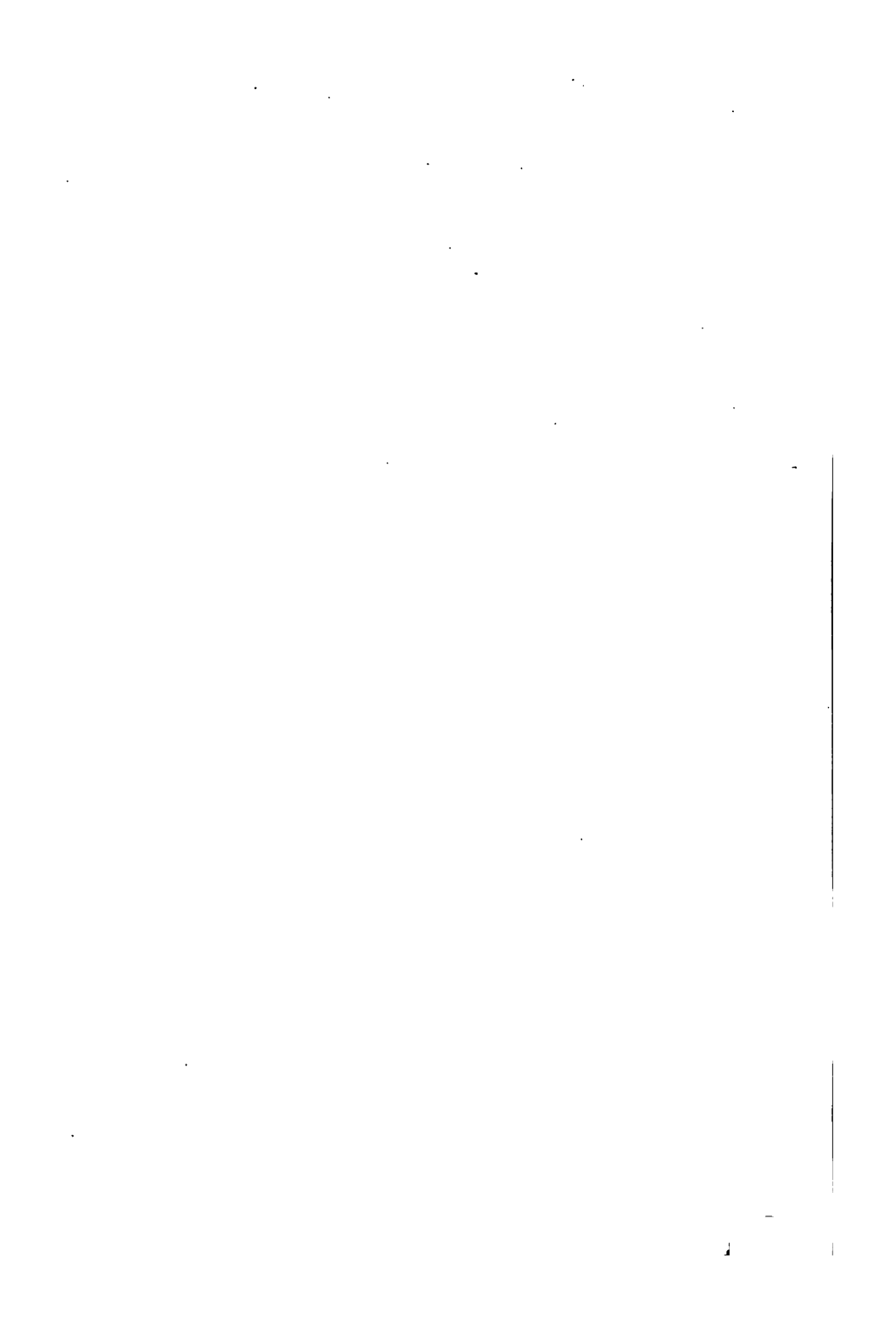
There is no group of men to whom America owes more than to these religious radicals. The most popular of Jefferson's biographers well says, identifying the principles of Jefferson with the principles of our democracy, "If Jefferson was wrong, America is wrong; if America is right, Jefferson is right." I think this is the truth. If this great Republic succeeds, it will be in fidelity to the political principles of Jefferson and Franklin and

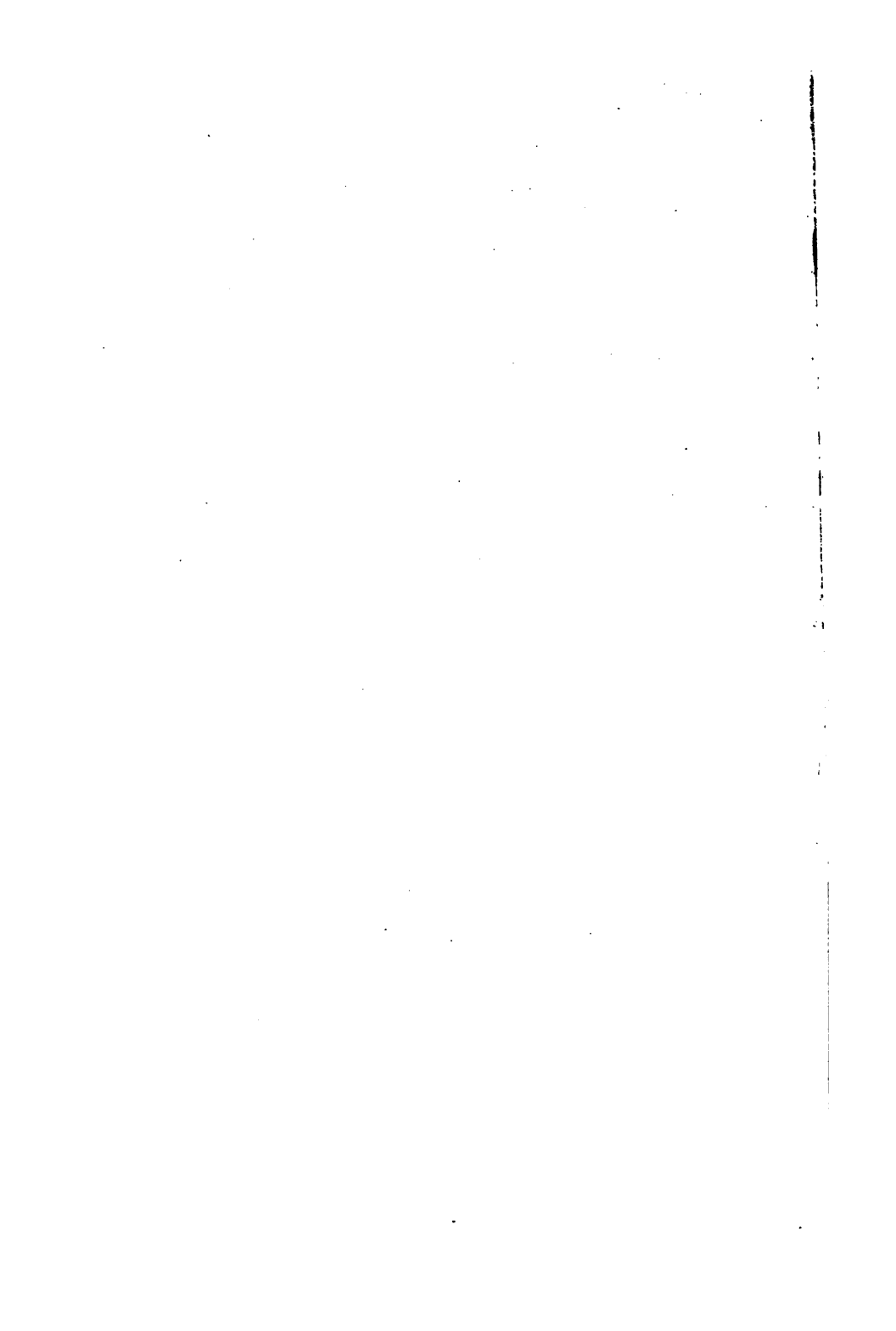
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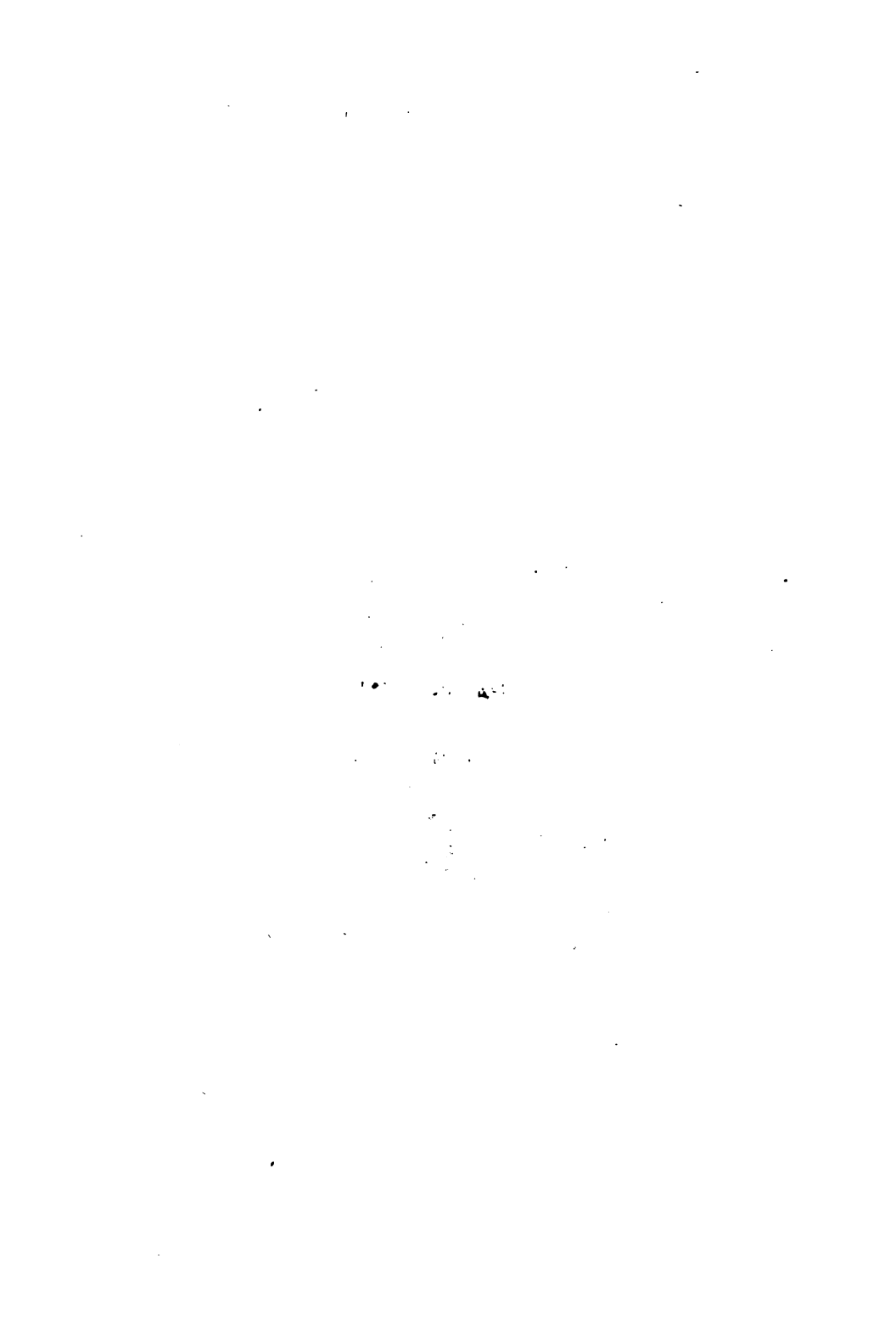
Thomas Paine ; it will be in fidelity to the principles of democracy. And that alone is the true conception of religion to-day which sees that it is an expression in its own field of what in the political field is democracy. Let us never, therefore, when we meet to celebrate the services of the various religious bodies, forget to pay tribute to this noble body of the unclassified, of the religious radicals, the free thinkers, who, if not indeed ecclesiastically organized, have been members of the great body of humanity and have been striving to lead humanity ever onward and upward.

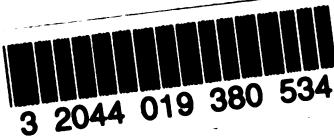












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